RESOLUTION - EXHIBIT I
WEBSTER TELEPHONE EXCHANGE BUILDING
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, Bertha Calloway is the properly authorized representative of the Great Plains Black Museum; and,

WHEREAS, this representative, on July 2, 1980, requested that the Webster Telephone Exchange Building be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha's Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Webster Telephone Exchange Building was designed by renowned Omaha architect Thomas R. Kimball; and,

WHEREAS, the Webster Telephone Exchange Building, constructed in 1907, is eclectic in style using neo-classicism in the symmetrical arrangement of the facade and Jacobethan Revival elements in the building's details; and,

WHEREAS, the Webster Telephone Exchange Building was constructed by the Nebraska Telephone Company, the most successful and dominant telephone company in the State of Nebraska during 1890s and 1900s; and,

WHEREAS, the Webster Telephone Exchange since 1933 has served as the center of community life for the Near North Side neighborhood.

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

THAT, the Webster Telephone Exchange Building, 2213 Lake Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE
7-17-80

REQUEST

- Landmark Designation
- Landmark Heritage
- District Designation
- Certificate of Approval to Perform Work

CATEGORY

- District
- X Building
- Structure
- Site
- Object

APPLICANT

Great Plains Black Museum

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK

2213 Lake Street

PRESENT USE

Museum

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN

Conforms to 24th and Lake Street Redevelopment Plan where it is shown to be a historic structure worthy of preservation.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Existing: Deteriorated residential and commercial neighborhood east of 24th & Lake Streets in which active Community Development programs have initiated major redevelopment efforts. The structure is proximate to St. John's AME Church (a Landmark Heritage Preservation Commission property) and Myer's Funeral Home.

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

Designation will contribute to stabilization of neighborhood and promote awareness of architectural resources within the Black Community.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 1977
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic
Webster Telephone Exchange Building
and/or Common
Great Plains Black Museum

LOCATION
Street and Number
2213 Lake Street

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name
Great Plains Black Museum
Phone Number
344-0350
Street and Number
2213 Lake Street
City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, NE 68111

Representative
Bertha Calloway
Phone Number
344-0350
Street and Number
2213 Lake Street
City, State and Zip Code
Omaha, NE 68111

LEGAL DESCRIPTION
Lot 27, Paulsen's Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title National Register of Historic Places
Date 1977
Federal X
State ___
County ___
Local ___
Title: Nebraska State Historical Society, Douglas County #D009, 6-7
Date: March 1978

X State

Title: Historic Omaha Building Survey, LHPC, Omaha
Date: 1980

X Local
Ms. Connie Findlay
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission
1819 Farnam Street
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Ms. Findlay:

Thank you for your letter of June 27th regarding the Great Plains Black Museum Building - and originally known as The Webster Exchange Building at 2213 Lake Street, I am sorry that the Commission was not contacted in November, but I am very pleased that you reminded us through your letter that we discuss the possibility of the local Landmark Designation which of course is also very important.

Please let us know whatever we can do to work with the Commission for consideration of the designation, we are very much in favor of this, and will support any efforts to work and cooperate with the Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission.

Respectfully,

[Signature]
Mrs. Bertha Calloway
Director
Great Plains Black Museum
**National Register of Historic Places**

**Inventory -- Nomination Form**

**See Instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms**

**Type All Entries -- Complete Applicable Sections**

**Name**

**Historic**

Webster Telephone Exchange Building

**And/or Common**

Great Plains Black Museum

**Location**

**Street & Number**

2213 Lake Street

**City, Town**

Omaha

**State**

Nebraska

**Classification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Work in Progress</td>
<td>Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Public Acquisition</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Yes: Restricted</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being Considered</td>
<td>Yes: Unrestricted</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Owner of Property**

**Name**

Bertha W. & James T. Calloway

**Street & Number**

2213 Lake Street

**City, Town**

Omaha

**State**

Nebraska

**Location of Legal Description**

**Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc.**

Douglas County Courthouse

**Street & Number**

17th & Farnam Streets

**City, Town**

Omaha

**State**

Nebraska

**Representation in Existing Surveys**

**Title**

**Date**

**Depository for Survey Records**

**City, Town**

**State**
DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR

CHECK ONE

- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

- UNALTERED
- ALtered
- X ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED
- DATE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Webster Telephone Exchange Building is located in a mixed commercial/residential area which is one-half block from 24th St., the primary commercial street for the Near North Side neighborhood. The brick building was opened June 9, 1907 by the Nebraska Telephone Co. as one of their exchange buildings. The portion of L-shaped brick building which faces Lake Street is one and a half stories tall with a full basement and the rest of the building is one story plus basement. A brick water table defines the line between first floor and basement. The exterior appears unchanged with the exception of the painting of part of the stone trim and the replacement of the front door.

The exterior facade is strongly symmetrical. The central doorway is emphasized with quoin-like alternating bands of stone and brick. The words "Nebraska Telephone Co." are carved into stone above the entrance. Aside from the doorway the strongest feature of exterior is the large rectangular windows with stone lintels on each side of the door. These windows, the dormer windows and small windows complete the symmetrical arrangement. The slate roof has parapeted gable ends. Fancy brickwork trims the dormer windows and brick corbelling highlights the cornice line.

The Webster Exchange is eclectic in style using neo-classicism in the symmetrical arrangement of the facade and Jacobethan Revival elements in the building's details. Having previously designed many buildings in a classical vein, architect Kimball enforces the classical symmetry of the facade even when the interior function seems to call for a change. For example, the transom of the large west window on the front facade is brick filled in a pattern which matches the dormer brickwork. The small dormer window above this is also taller than its opposite counterpart. Although the original interior plans are not available, it appears that the function of the rooms may have necessitated that these spaces be open or closed. Both of these changes were done discreetly so as to interfere as little as possible with the symmetry. The quoin-like doorway surround also has classical elements.

The windows, doorway, roof and building materials are typical of the Jacobethan Revival style which was popular nationally in the 1890-1915 period. The prominent rectangular windows divided into rectangular lights by mullions are common in the style. Usually of stone, the mullions are brick here but stone sills and lintels are strongly emphasized. The other windows are Tudor-arched which is historically appropriate for the period. The ridged roof with parapeted gable ends, round-arched doorway and the use of brick with stone trim are all typical features of the style.

The interior has been remodeled repeatedly and is not historically or architecturally significant. The original plans have not been found. After its completion in 1907, the building was remodeled into a community center in 1933, an apartment house in 1952 and is now being adapted into a museum.
The Webster Telephone Exchange Building is significant in the areas of communications, architecture and for its importance to the black community. The building was constructed as part of the system of telephone exchanges of the Nebraska Telephone Co. Located in the center of the black community, the building has served as a community center and is now the Great Plains Black Museum. It was designed in 1907 by Thomas R. Kimball, the most prominent of Nebraska architects.

One of several exchanges throughout Omaha, the Webster Telephone Exchange was part of the Nebraska Telephone Co. system. Incorporated in 1882 the company had purchased the Omaha Electric Co., the first exchange in the state (1879). The Nebraska Telephone Co. had received from the American Bell Telephone Co. the perpetual right to use the invention of the telephone in the state. After the first decade of existence, telephone use increased rapidly and the company was successful and the dominant telephone company in the state. Many of the exchange buildings, including the Webster Exchange (1907), were constructed in the 1905-1915 period of intensive growth partially stimulated by the competition of the independent telephone companies. American Bell Telephone gradually purchased stock in the company until it gained full control in 1912. The telephone company donated the Webster Exchange for use as the Mid-City Community Center in 1933.

Black Americans have been a part of the heritage of Omaha and Nebraska since the territorial period of the 1850's. The first major immigration of blacks to Nebraska occurred in the 1870's and the majority settled in Omaha. Housing in Omaha during the 19th century was available to anyone who could pay and ethnic ghettos were not common. However, by the turn of the century, the situation had changed. Blacks were slowly pushed into the area designated the Near North Side which centered on 24th & Lake Streets. A smaller community of blacks was segregated in South Omaha near the stockyards. During 1910-1920 segregation and tension increased as a large influx of blacks from the South arrived for the growing number of industrial jobs created by World War I. Tension and resentment broke out in a riot in 1919 and a black man was lynched. The Near North Side has continued to be the center of the black community to the present day.

The Omaha chapter of the National Urban League was organized in 1928 to foster improvement in the economic, industrial, social and housing conditions of blacks. The American Bell Telephone Co. donated the Webster Exchange Building to the Urban League in 1933 and it was remodelled into a community center. A community center for blacks had existed since 1920 but it was consolidated with the Urban League in 1933. The Mid-City
Community Center had a free employment bureau, library, reading room, sewing room, day nursery, medical and dental clinic, and Little Theatre. Adult education classes and young people's groups were sponsored at the center.

The community center existed until about 1950. The building was sold and remodeled into a 16 unit apartment house. In the 1970's the building was used one year as a community center for Greater Omaha Community Action. Since 1975 the Great Plains Black Museum was founded to preserve the black heritage of the area thru the museum and archives.

The Webster Telephone Exchange is one of the lesser buildings designed by Thomas R. Kimball. President of the American Institute of Architects 1918-1920 and active nationally in the profession, Kimball is the most notable of Nebraska architects. Born April 19, 1862 in Linwood, Ohio, and raised in Omaha, Kimball attended the University of Nebraska for two years (1877-78) and at the age of eighteen went to Boston to study art and painting. He graduated from the three year architectural program at M.I.T. and continued his studies of art in Paris under the painter, Harpignes.

While in partnership with C. Howard Walker, Boston (1889-1898), Kimball was in charge of the Omaha office. The firm was architect-in-chief of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Omaha, 1898. In that year he withdrew from the firm and had his own office for the next thirty years. Although much of his work is in Omaha, his designs are throughout Nebraska and surrounding states (see Hall County Courthouse, Grand Island, Nebraska and Burlington Station, Omaha, NRHP nominations).

Prominent in his profession, Kimball was an advisor to the architectural commissions for the Nebraska State Capitol, Indianapolis War Memorial and the Kansas City War Memorial. Besides serving as national president of A.I.A., he was a member of the Board of Directors and was elected a Fellow of the society.
### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY</th>
<th>LESS THAN ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UTM REFERENCES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZONE EASTING</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FORM PREPARED BY

**NAME / TITLE**
Penelope B. Chatfield, Curator of Historic Sites

**ORGANIZATION**
Nebraska State Historical Society

**STREET & NUMBER**
1500 R Street

**CITY OR TOWN**
Lincoln

**STATE**
Nebraska

### STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:  

- NATIONAL ___  
- STATE ___  
- LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), 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.

**TITLE**
State Historic Preservation Officer Signature

**DATE**
6/6/77

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**DATE**

**ATTEST**

**DATE**

**KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

**DATE**
Bibliography

Butterfield, Consul W.
History of the City of Omaha and South Omaha, Nebraska. Omaha, Western Heritage Society (1894) 1976.

Chudacoff, Howard P.

Nebraska Federal Writers Program, W.P.A.
Negroes of Nebraska. Lincoln: Woodruff Printing Co., 1940.

Nebraska Federal Writers' Project, W.P.A.

Northwestern Bell
Public Relations Department, Miscellaneous notes. Filed at Nebraska State Historical Society, Historic Preservation Office.

Pinkett, H. J.

Sullenger, T. Earl and J. Harvey Kerns
The Negro in Omaha. Unpublished manuscript, Municipal University of Omaha and Omaha Urban League. 1931.

Vanden Berge, Peter Nicholas
The History of the Telephone in Nebraska, 1877-1912. MS., M.A. Thesis, University of Nebraska. 1938.

Wakeley, Arthur C.

Whiffen, Marcus
LHPC Case No. H1-80-13, APPLICANT Great Plains Black Museum requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 2213 Lake Street. Area to be designated is shaded.
ORDINANCE NO 29307

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Webster Telephone Exchange Building, located at 2213 Lake 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 Webster Telephone Exchange Building is located at 2213 Lake Street, which is legally described as follows

Lot 27, Paulsen's 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 Webster Telephone Exchange Building are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation

Section 3 That the Webster Telephone Exchange 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 COUNCILMEMBER

Steve Rosenblatt

APPROVED

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF OMAHA DATE

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

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF OMAHA

Rt. Hon. Mayor, City of Omaha
ORDINANCE NO 29307

AN ORDINANCE to designate the Webster Telephone Exchange Building, located at 2213 Lake Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha

PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading SEP 30 1980

2nd Reading OCT 7 1980

Hearing OCT 7 1980 Motion to Continue Public Hearing to Third Reading OCT 14 1980

Final Reading OCT 14 1980

Passed

Mary Sullivan Borrier
AN ORDINANCE to designate the

Werner Taubenhaus Exchange

Building, located at 2256 East 19th

Street, as a Landmark Building in the

Landmark Preservation Ordinance of the

City of Cleveland, Ohio.

APPROVED OCTOBER 14, 1959

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND

1959.40

AN ORDINANCE to designate the

Werner Taubenhaus Exchange

Building, located at 2256 East 19th

Pr. 2000

STREET, as a Landmark Building in the

Landmark Preservation Ordinance of the

MAYOR OF THE

CITY OF CLEVELAND

1959.40