RESOLUTION – EXHIBIT I
G. F. Epeneter Residence
LANDMARKS HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

WHEREAS, John J. Thomas is the owner of the G. F. Epeneter Residence, 502 North 40th Street; and,

WHEREAS, this owner, on December 29, 1978, requested that the G. F. Epeneter Residence be designated as a Landmark under the City of Omaha’s Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the G. F. Epeneter Residence was erected in 1905 by Gustave F. Epeneter, the owner of the Eagle Cornice Works; and,

WHEREAS, the G. F. Epeneter Residence displays a variety of ornamental galvanized iron and stamped tin surfaces manufactured by the Eagle Cornice Works; and,

WHEREAS, the G. F. Epeneter Residence is representative of the Classic Box style of architecture found in many cities which experienced a burst of population growth at the turn of the nineteenth century; and,

WHEREAS, the G. F. Epeneter Residence is historically related to Alfred Beaton, a prominent Omaha businessman.

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

THAT, the G. F. Epeneter Residence, 502 North 40th Street, be designated as a Landmark of the City of Omaha.
Landmarks Heritage Preservation Commission

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

INSPECTION DATE

2/10/79

REQUEST

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

CATEGORY

- District
- Building
- Structure
- Site
- Object

APPLICANT

John J. Thomas, Jr.

LOCATION OF PROPOSED DESIGNATION OR WORK

502 North 40th Street

PRESENT USE

Single Family residence

CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN

Conforms to the 1977 Community Development Master Plan's Conservation Areas in which spot rehabilitation, zoning and code enforcement is proposed.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Existing: Single family residences, multi-family conversions and medium-rise apartments border a turn-of-the-century neighborhood containing prominent Omaha landmarks.

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

Designation will promote the restoration or rehabilitation of surrounding residential property and give public notice as to the importance of this neighborhood in Omaha's evolving heritage.

PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

PLANNING DIRECTOR'S RECOMMENDATION

Approval

ADDITIONAL DATA
APPLICATION FOR LANDMARK OR LANDMARK HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGNATION

NAME OF STRUCTURE
Historic  G. F. Epeneter Residence
and/or Common

LOCATION
Street and Number
502 N. 40th Street

CLASSIFICATION

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OWNER OF PROPERTY
Name  John J. Thomas
Street and Number  502 N. 40th Street
City, State and Zip Code  Omaha, NE  68131

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

The South 19 Feet of Lot 5, all of Lot 6 and ½ of the vacant alley adjacent,
Block 9, Poppleton Park Addition, Douglas County, Nebraska

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
Title  Inventory of Historic Structures, Omaha City Planning Department
Date  1975

Federal State County Local
DESCRIPTION
Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
Specific Dates
Architect
Builder

11-29-78  [Signature]
Date  Signature of Owner/Representative
DESCRIPTION

Erected in 1905 at a cost of $2500 by the owner of the Eagle Cornice Works, Gustave F. Epeneter, the 26' x 32' frame residence and proximate barn display a variety of ornamental galvanized iron and stamped tin surfaces. The two-story Classic Box (1890-1910) structure is a representative of a style found in many cities which experienced a burst of population growth at the turn of the century. A creative response to site constraints and fashionable trends, the Classic Box pulled in its wings in contrast to the spread eagle posture of the Queen Anne style (1880-1900). The parts of the house were retracted into an orderly package, with flush planes, flattened ornamentation, and few protruding parts. Even bay windows, when they exist on the side or front, are compressed, a broad angle minimizing the distance of projection.

At the same time, the rectangular layout recalled the floor plan of the colonists' they had set out to initiate. The earliest settlers in the 17th century had designed the first American dwellings no more than one room deep under the main roof. The more sophisticated Colonial style which soon followed, and persisted as the most common style in the 18th century, was just as wide, but twice as deep. Called "double-pile", this floor plan consisted of two rows of rooms, broadside facing front. This orientation of interior spaces is found again in the G. F. Epeneter residence of the early 20th century.

The centrally located front door leads to a foyer delineated by a dark finished oak and canvas panelled wainscoting. Overhead, ceiling beams separate a deeply set, stamped tin ornamental ceiling into three rectangular groupings. A "U" shaped staircase of simple design rises to a landing which boasts a built-in oak window seat. Five bedrooms and a bathroom with an octagonal tile floor, claw-foot tub and pedestal sink compose the second floor. A third floor ballroom, with floors of pine and a central, stamped tin ceiling ventilator, provided turn-of-the-century guests with an unobstructed view of the developing countryside.
Surrounding the foyer on the main floor are a living and dining room and on the flip side of the double-pile plan a sitting room with fireplace and kitchen. Oak woodwork and flooring is employed throughout the first floor and brass gas fixtures originally provided the major source of artificial light. Classic oak columns originally emphasized the entrance to the living room where ornamentation is limited to an oak window seat set in a slightly projecting bay window. The dining room, wainscotted in canvas and oak, is crowned by a stamped tin anaglyph which covers the entire ceiling area. A four-part repeating image containing the muses of poetry and music surrounds an elaborate inverted dome from which originally hung a brass chandelier. The kitchen ceiling again explores another application of the Eagle Cornice Work’s ornamental tin but in this case the central anaglyph is set within a network of embossed square pans.

On the exterior the Classic Box residence is capped by a galvanized iron balustraded deck on a hip roof. Dormers containing pairs of double-hung windows project from all four exposures - hipped roofs within a hipped roof. At the cornice, stamped galvanized iron exposed rafters, constituting decoration derived directly from structure, separate stamped dentil and egg-and-dart ornamental motifs. The frieze is also of stamped galvanized iron and contains swag garlands of fruit and flowers. Known as festoons, the garlands also appear in a band under the iron cornices above each double-hung window on the three major exposures of the residence. While this decoration recalls Victorian ornament, the exposed rafters anticipate the Craftsman era.

The window arrangement, set within slender, clapboard siding, is fairly symmetrical on all facades. Upper sashes contain diamond-shaped loaded partitions and every window is framed by a wide strip of flat wood trim. Hugging the corners of the house are two-story fluted wooden pilasters.

The front door, which is enshrined beneath a portico extending across the house, is emphasized by a central projecting pediment located directly below a second story bay window.
The portico's cornice, fascia, central pediment, supporting columns and pilasters, ceiling, and balustrade railing are all again clad in stamped galvanized iron panels produced by Epeneters Eagle Cornice Works. The balusters supporting the porch railing are "S" scrolls formed in wrought iron.

The one and one-half story barn, located to the west of the residence, is of frame construction and is covered with narrow clapboard siding. A gable roofed dormer projects from the east side of a clipped gable roof.
SIGNIFICANCE

The development of North 40th Street in the first decade of the nineteenth century coincided with the construction of St. Cecilia's Cathedral at 40th and Burt. Although the homes were less pretentious and grandiose than those being built in the Gold Coast area south of Dodge, or on North 38th Street east of the area, the dwellings represented the homes of well-to-do businessmen and community leaders.

Gustave F. Epeneter erected his home and barn (later converted to a garage) at 502 North 40th Street in 1905 just as construction was beginning on St. Cecilia's two blocks north. The Epeneter family moved to Omaha from Council Bluffs in 1885, and opened the Eagle Cornice Works at 1110–1112 Dodge Street. Employing thirty men, the company manufactured galvanized iron cornices through the process of ornamental stamping. Omaha historians Savage and Bell claimed the Eagle Cornice Works was the only operation west of Chicago which utilized this process.

Gustave Epeneter was foreman and superintendent of the Cornice Works from 1885 until 1896. The death of John Epeneter, (probably Gustave's father or older brother) in May, 1895 elevated Gustave to the position of proprietor. He operated the Cornice Works at three locations until 1925: 614 South 10th Street, 1212 Jackson Street and 2709–2713 Cuming Street.

The Epeneter family lived in the home at 502 North 40th Street for about five years, then apparently decided to sell it and build another home next door. Alfred J. Beaton bought the Epeneter home and moved in with his wife, Edith Orcutt Beaton, and their two children in 1912. Alfred Beaton was one of five sons of Allan and Mary Ann Beaton, Canadians of Scotch and French ancestry who moved to Schuyler, Nebraska in 1875. Allan Beaton had been a shipbuilder in Canada, then worked as a general contractor and carpenter in Nebraska. The family moved to Omaha in 1879, but the death of Allan at age 44 two years later left Mary Beaton
with five sons, the oldest under ten years old.

Despite their difficult circumstances, each of the five sons went on to become respected professionals and businessmen in the City. Alfred studied at Creighton University and began his career as a salesman with the Omaha Carpet Company. By purchasing the assets of other companies, Beaton organized the Miller, Stewart and Beaton Company, a furniture store located in the 400 block of South 16th Street. This was also the location of the Beaton and Laier Company, another furniture firm organized by Beaton in 1912.

Beaton may have decided to reside at 502 North 40th Street because he was a member of St. Cecilia's. His family was also active socially, and belonged to the Omaha Club and the Omaha Country Club. In 1907, Beaton suffered ptomaine poisoning from which he never fully recovered. He continued to work until two years before his death in February, 1916, at age 43.

Edith Orcutt Beaton married George Utendorfer several years later, and they remained in the home until the early 1970's. Her son, Orcutt Beaton, lived with them throughout his life. Utendorfer operated Bankers Investment Company, bond brokers, from the home over the 50-year period. Orcutt was a sometime partner in the operation, but worked most of his life as a clerk at MUD.

Alfred Beaton's younger brothers, Charles, John and Paul, were all active in Omaha commercial life as well. Charles and John opened the first Beaton Drug Store in 1899 at 15th and Farnam, and eventually controlled four throughout the City. They also organized the Beaton Photo Supply and Beaton Realty Company. Paul, a World War I veteran of the balloon service, was in the insurance business until his death at age 46 in 1923.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


LHPC Case No. HI-79-1, APPLICANT John J. Thomas requests LANDMARK DESIGNATION for 502 North 40th Street (G.F Epeneter Residence). Area to be designated is shaded.
ORDINANCE NO 28644

AN ORDINANCE to designate the G F Epeneter Residence, located at 502 North 40th 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 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 G F Epeneter Residence are hereby deemed significant and worthy of preservation

Section 3 That the G F Epeneter Residence is hereby designated pursuant to Section 4 16 080 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 COUNCILMAN

Steve Rosenblatt

APPROVED BY

Mayor of the City of Omaha DATE

APPROVED AS TO FORM

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

Buster Brown, City Clerk, City of Omaha
ORDINANCE NO 28694

AN ORDINANCE to designate the G F Epeneter Residence, located at 502 North 40th Street as a Landmark pursuant to the Landmark Heritage Preservation Ordinance of the City of Omaha

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PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

1st Reading APR 3 1979
Hearing 4-10-79

Hearing APR 10 1979
Once to 4-17-79

Final Reading APR 14 1979
Passed

Mary Colleen Briente
AN ORDINANCE to designate the
G F. Epesnor Residence located at
502 North 40th Street as a Landmark
pursuant to the Landmark Heritage
Preservation Ordinance of the City of
Omaha.

PASSED: April 17, 1979
APPROVED
AL VETES
MAYOR OF THE
CITY OF OMAHA

MARY GALLIGAN CORBETT
City Clerk

4-18-79