

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK/SITE NAME: The Ned A. Eppes House**OWNER:** Mr. Manuel J. Mehos**APPLICANT:** Mr. Manuel J. Mehos**LOCATION:** 5322 Institute Lane**30-DAY HAHC HEARING NOTICE:** Aug-10-97**AGENDA ITEM:** Iq**PC MEETING DATE:** Oct-02-97**HPO FILE NO.:** 96LD39**DATE ACCEPTED:** Jul-24-97**HAHC HEARING DATE:** 9-11-97**SITE INFORMATION**

Lot 4, South 7' 9" of Lot 3, and the North 25' of Lot 5, Block 1, Jandor Gardens Addition, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The buildings on the site include a two-story, concrete block residence and a garage.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation**HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE:**

According to the National Register nomination (pending) by Marta McBride Galicki, the Eppes House was built in 1926. It was named after its original owner, Ned Alwin Eppes (1883-1929). He was a highly successful local entrepreneur who had arrived in Houston from San Antonio in 1921. He was a concrete "pioneer" and was one of the first to introduce the use of concrete pipe in this part of the world. The Eppes House is one of the earliest documented examples in Houston of a concrete house. The Eppes House is a two-story, concrete block, slightly asymmetrical house. It exemplifies the Italian Renaissance Villa style, sometimes called the Second Renaissance Revival style, that was popular from about 1890 to 1935. It is found in early 20th century domestic architecture throughout America but is notably less common than other styles. Use of high style classical architectural decoration was common in Houston in the 1920s but this style was relatively rare. The house is also of interest because it is a visible reminder of the development of the Jandor Gardens "private place" neighborhood in 1924-1925 by Howard Gray Fields (1883-1960): it is notable as the only remaining example of an Italian Renaissance Villa in Jandor Gardens.

The Eppes House is a two-story, raised villa; it has a basement which rests on a concrete foundation. The concrete walls are covered in a concrete-stucco finish. Dressings are of stucco and "art stone." There are projecting sills throughout. The villa is crowned by a red, barrel-shaped, concrete-tile, hip roof with broadly projecting, boxed eaves supported by decorative wood brackets. The chimneys are covered with stucco. Behind the house, the original garage on the northwest corner of the lot echoes the house in design and materials.

The Eppes House derives significance from its builder, English-born Albert Edward Scott (1883-1973). It also derives significance from its architects, John McLelland and Brickey, Wiggins and Brickey, who were local interpreters of a high style of architecture using innovative concrete materials and techniques which were fabricated and patented by their client, Ned A. Eppes. His house is a reflection of his pioneering efforts in the manufacture, marketing and use of concrete in Houston during the 1920s. He was a concrete "pioneer" and was the first one in this part of the world to introduce the use of concrete pipe in lieu of clay pipe. From his start in 1922, he was enormously successful in this venture and carried out his business all over Texas through his Houston-based company called the Gulf Concrete Pipe Company. The company manufactured pipe for various purposes including sanitary sewer and drain pipe, culverts, etc. Evidence of his impact on Houston in the 1920s can be appreciated in the many miles of concrete pipe still found beneath the city today. At his other plants, Eppes manufactured concrete blocks (hollow tile), "art stone" and concrete roofing tiles (lighter than clay).

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Documents in the possession of the present owner verify that the builder, A. E. Scott, assisted Ned Eppes in the marketing of his concrete products by designing and building large displays for trade exhibitions in the 1920s. Other information suggest that Eppes and Scott also seem to have associated in certain as of yet undocumented residential developments. Scott continued to be active in the building trade well into the 1950s. As for the architect, McLelland, some of his other commissions include: Magnolia Park Junior High School, Pasadena High School, Crosby High School, Park Place Grade School, the Montrose School, Southmore School, Eastwood Episcopal Church, and Harrisburg Episcopal Church, Houston's Golfcrest Country Club (demolished) all in the Houston area; and Polk County Courthouse (Livingston). He was also supervising architect for the following: South End Junior High School, Houston Heights High School, and residences for A. W. Crausbay and E. C. Wilson. As for Brickey, Wiggins and Brickey, they were a Dallas firm that was active in Houston from 1925-1927. Other commissions include the Howard G. Fields' house on Institute Lane; Warwick Hotel (1926) and other smaller homes for B. P. Panas (Blodgett Street); George King, Alvin Beyer, C. B. Frazier, W. O. Woods, Robert Kerry, and J. E. Rogers.

Mr. Eppes died in 1929 and his wife, Linda Sckerls Eppes continued to live there until 1938. She sold the house to J. Ross Richardson of Harris County. In the late 1940s the house passed into the hands of the John Abercrombie family and thence to Lela LeJeune Abercrombie Barkley. It remained in that family for decades, until 1981. In the 1980s the house was purchased by Van W. and Tana S. Teeters. They added the porte-cochere, rear loggia, pool and pool house. The house was sold in 1996 to the present owner who restored and sensitively enlarged the house.

RESTORATION HISTORY AND PRESENT CONDITION:

The house retains a very high degree of integrity because most of the changes that have occurred are discreet, if not reversible and do not effect the overall architectural integrity of the property. The porte-cochere is setback and the materials are compatible so it does not significantly impact the integrity of the original house. The rear loggia, pool and poolhouse are discreet and cannot be detected from the street. They have a minimal impact on the historic appearance of the property. The three-bay, arched loggia has a red-tiled roof, stucco finish and beaded-board ceiling that extends the width of the rear, first-floor facade. Although built in the 1980s, it is compatible with the original building. A two-story infill-building (constructed after 1969) between the rear wing of the main house and the garage, functions as a poolhouse and is reminiscent in style and materials to the main house.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION....:

Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation of a Landmark.

(a) The HAHC and the commission, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

S D NA

S - satisfies D - does not satisfy NA - not applicable

- (1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation;
- (2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;

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- (3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation;
- (4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;
- (5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood;
- (6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;
- (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.

HAHC RECOMMENDATION:

At a public hearing on September 11, 1997, the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission determined that the application complied with criteria found in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, and recommended that the Planning Commission accepts the recommendation of the HAHC and forward it to City Council for the designation of the Ned A. Eppes House as a Landmark of the City of Houston.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission accepts the recommendation of the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission and forward it to City Council for designation of the Ned A. Eppes House as a Landmark of the City of Houston.

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SITE LOCATION MAP
THE NED A. EPPES HOUSE
5322 INSTITUTE LANE
NOT TO SCALE

