

Charles Miller House

Historic Significance and Integrity Assessment Report

6938 E. 1st Street, Scottsdale, Arizona, 85251

Background

The Scottsdale Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance No. 3242, amending the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Scottsdale) was passed in July 1999, thereby creating the Scottsdale Historic Register (SHR) to serve as the City's official list of historic and archeological resources which have special significance in United States, Arizona, and/or Scottsdale history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture. Pursuant to Sec. 6.118.B, the Scottsdale Historic Preservation Officer has conducted a preliminary study of the Charles Miller House and has identified the Charles Miller House as having historic and architectural significance.

Historic Context: Early Town Building, 1908-1933

Scottsdale's historic development followed a pattern typically found in Western communities. Like other Arizona cities and towns, the provision of a reliable water supply was critical to sustaining the community's vitality after its initial settlement in the late 1800s. With the completion of the Arizona Canal to the area by William J. Murphy in 1888, the construction of Granite Reef Dam in 1908 followed by Roosevelt Dam in 1911, Scottsdale shared in the population boom that transformed the Salt River Valley in the early decades of the last century. Federal policies also promoted western agricultural development with provisions in the 1877 Desert Land Act requiring land to be irrigated within three years of acquisition. A Southern Pacific Railroad spur first reached the small Phoenix settlement in 1887. A main line rail connection to the national railway system in 1924 provided further impetus for growth and development through immigration and increased access to national market areas.

Scottsdale grew slowly but steadily during this period as a small market town principally providing services for families involved in agriculture, which utilized water rights from the Arizona Canal for irrigation. Within the core of the original Scottsdale town site are several extant buildings that represent this early period of the community's development. The date they were built, the different building types and style of their construction, their uses over the years, as well as their location, illustrate the traditional pattern of community development that occurred in Scottsdale, Arizona and throughout the West in the early twentieth century.

Location

The Charles Miller House address is 6938 E. 1st Street, just west of Goldwater Boulevard. The house is located within a larger parcel and development identified as Charles Miller Square. The property owner is Zebra Family Trust, Richard A. Funke, trustee.

Physical Description

The Charles Miller House is a small one-story frame



*The residence wa
Richard Funke to*

*Entrance with new reconstructed
pier on rebuilt wooden porch.*

Bungalow style residence built circa 1913. It has a low-pitched gable roof with exposed rafter tails and ornamental brackets typical of the Bungalow style. A smaller similar style roof is repeated over part of the front porch. The owner recently replaced the corrugated metal roof with wooden shingles to be more in keeping with the original character of the home and in response to city recommendations on the roofing material. The gable ends of the roof and porch are sheathed in decorative painted wooden shingles. The exterior walls are clad in painted narrow shiplap wood siding, some of which had to be replaced when the home was moved to its current location. An entry porch covers half the front façade with an ornamental wooden trellis covering the remaining half of the porch. The porch and trellis are supported by three elephantine wood piers on a wooden porch. The owner reconstructed the wooden porch and supports piers based upon early photos of the home since the original porch was removed when the home was moved to 75th Place in 1955 where the porch was supported by simple square wooden posts on a concrete slab.

A wood framed entrance is located at the approximate center of the primary façade in its original location. The owner had an entry door custom made for the house in a style that is more appropriate than an earlier replacement. Two types of wooden windows flank the entry door. On the left is a large square window topped by a divided light transom. A set of triple similarly configured windows is on the right of the entrance. Simple wood windows operable by hinges appear in various sizes and configurations on the sides and rear of the home. All windows have wooden sills and surrounds. A rear addition of an enclosed sleeping porch that was added after the 1955 move has been removed due to its poor condition and since it was not original to the rectangular floor plan.



Intact room divider with leaded glass cabinet doors.

The original floor plan contained a small living room, dining room and kitchen on the left side of the house, and two bedrooms and a bathroom on the right half of its roughly 24 foot wide by 30 foot long floor plan. Original interior features are remarkably intact. The original wood built-in cabinetry, the dining room window seat and bookcase room divider with leaded glass cabinet doors remain unpainted. Other intact characteristic Bungalow interior features include decorative exposed wood ceiling beams and a fireplace flanked with seating and bookcases.

History

The home was originally located on Indian School Road, east of Scottsdale Road on an 80 acre tract of land Charles Miller purchased from Winfield Scott's family in 1913. In about 1955 the home was moved to 75th Place, north of Thomas Road to save the Bungalow style home from demolition due to redevelopment on the northeast corner of Scottsdale and Indian School Roads. In 2000 the Charles Miller home was again threatened with demolition when the property on 75th Place was proposed for rezoning and redevelopment to a higher residential density. Richard Funke stepped up and saved the home from demolition by having the home moved to its current location on 1st Street, just west of Goldwater Boulevard. Richard Funke moved and renovated the home at his own expense and has leased the restored home for office use although the building is currently (11/09) vacant. The roughly 30,000 square foot larger parcel this home now sits within was rezoned by City Council from multi-family residential to Downtown/Office Commercial Type 2 on February 24,

2009. Other homes have been relocated to the property so a residential setting exists around the home in Charles Miller Square. A 37' wide by 75' deep portion of the larger lot containing the house is included in the proposed historic designation.

Charles Miller was an important figure in the early period of the town's development. Born in 1863 in Iowa, his family moved to South Dakota where the town Miller, SD was named after his father. He married Ella Bates in 1880 and they had two children, Bill and Murle. The family moved to Phoenix in 1907 and then purchased 120 acres of land in 1908 in Scottsdale for farming on the northeast corner of Indian School Road and what is now Miller Road. This property was the southeast quarter of Section 23 along the Arizona Canal that was originally purchased by Winfield Scott in 1888 for citrus farming under the Desert Land Act, which required that the land be irrigated. Charles Miller knew Winfield Scott and shared his passion for the idea of bringing a trolley from Phoenix to the growing agricultural community of Scottsdale. Both men served on the board of directors for the Orange Belt and Scottsdale Railroad Company in 1908 with Winfield Scott selected as president of the company. However, after Scott's death in late 1910 the idea of bringing a trolley to Scottsdale died with him.

Charles Miller bought 80 acres at the northeast corner of Scottsdale and Indian School Roads from Scott's family in 1913 after his death. The Arizona Canal was at the northwest corner of this 80 acres. The property contained 10 acres of orchards and vineyard that were the pride and joy of Winfield Scott, who heavily promoted the planting of citrus trees using water from the Arizona Canal. Winfield Scott and William J. Murphy, builder of the Arizona Canal, together played a major role in the development of commercial citrus production in the Salt River Valley. Charles Miller built his wood framed Bungalow on the corner of Scottsdale and Indian School Roads and continued citrus and other farming activities begun by Winfield and George Scott in 1889. House plans for Bungalow style homes were available at this time in magazines and catalogs. You could even order the parts for a complete home from a Sears Roebuck catalogue or from other suppliers. Since a rail line extended to Phoenix by this time, it is possible that Charles Miller ordered a Craftsman style Bungalow from a catalogue or he could have just purchased the house plans; it is uncertain which approach was used.

Charles Miller made other contributions to the fledgling Scottsdale community than farming the land from 1908 to 1950. In 1918 Charles Miller joined E. O. Brown and William E. Kimsey to form Scottsdale Light and Power Company to bring the first electricity to the town. The company contracted with Salt River Project for the power generated by the falls along the

Arizona Canal at roughly 56th Street and Indian School Road. The company started by the partners was purchased by Central Arizona Light and Power Company (Calapco) in 1939 which later became Arizona Public Service (APS) Company. Charles Miller also donated 10 acres of land on Indian School Road for Scottsdale High School and was elected to the Scottsdale School Board for three terms. His two children were two of the first three graduates from the high school in the class of 1923 that included Hunter Chesnutt, Bill Miller and Murle Miller. Charles Miller was elected to



Early photo of Charles Miller on the porch of his Bungalow house in this undated photo from the Scottsdale Historical Society.

the state legislature in 1922 but died in 1923 during his first term. His family continued to reside in the house on Indian School until 1955 when the house was moved to 75th Place, north of Thomas Road, and the corner of Scottsdale and Indian School was redeveloped with a restaurant.

Significance

The Charles Miller House is historically significant for its association with an important person, Charles Miller and its association with the early settlement of Scottsdale a century ago. Charles Miller was a prominent figure in Scottsdale in the early decades of the last century. The 80 acres he purchased from Winfield Scott's family, the founder of Scottsdale, was used for farming by his family and he built his family home on this land on the north side of Indian School Road. The first electric company in Scottsdale was founded by Charles Miller and partners in 1918. Charles Miller donated the land for the Scottsdale High School and served on the school board. Miller Road is now named after Charles Miller for his contribution to the early town building era of Scottsdale.

The house also represents a rare building type found in Scottsdale of early twentieth century wood framed Craftsman Bungalow style architecture. Several of the features of the building have been retained including its original form, design, materials and detailing, although the recent renovations replaced much of the original narrow wood siding and the roof. While local historic preservation efforts focus primarily on maintaining the exterior of historic buildings, many of the interior features characteristic of Craftsman style Bungalows are intact, including built-in cabinets, leaded glass cabinet doors, exposed wood ceiling beams and window seats. The owner has endeavored to reconstruct the front porch and piers as originally built and had a custom entry door made to replicate the style of door from the period. The roof material has also been replaced with appropriate wood shingles. The house has been moved twice to prevent its demolition and the current setting appears suitable. Therefore the house continues to convey its historic association to Charles Miller and to Bungalow style residential architecture in its existing location.



Current photo of house at 6938 E. 1st Street.