

Historic Significance and Integrity Assessment Report for Listing Titus House on the Scottsdale Historic Register

Titus House

1319 N. Hayden Road, Scottsdale, Arizona
Scottsdale Historic Register No. SHR-01-08
Resolution No. 5776

Background

With the adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance in July of 1999, the Scottsdale Historic Register (SHR) was established as the City's official list of historic and archaeological resources that have special significance in United States, Arizona or Scottsdale history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture. To determine the properties to recommend for nomination to the Scottsdale Historic Register, the City Preservation staff and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) have utilized the approaches and standards that guide the professional work of the field nationwide. The building historically known as Titus House, 1310 North Hayden Road, was one of the properties recognized by the City as historically significant under an earlier City Historic Preservation program. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was nominated for the register primarily under Criteria C, for its architectural significance.

Historic Context: Arts Colony and Tourist Destination

Clean air, sunshine and the natural desert beauty were amenities that attracted early settlers to the Valley. These attributes were extensively promoted by real estate developers to bring visitors to the area who might eventually decide to relocate here. Advertisements touting the climate and environment as well as the economic opportunities were distributed nationwide. Local civic leaders and boosters even traveled to other areas of the country to encourage and recruit visitors.

Scottsdale's favorable climate, irrigated desert location and beautiful scenery influenced its initial settlement and the religious persuasions of these settlers contributed to its origins as a community of culture. Many of the community's original settlers were recruited from the Midwest and East by Scottsdale's founder, Winfield Scott. Most were educated and had an appreciation for cultural activities. Newspaper accounts routinely reported on social gatherings where music programs, educational lectures and other entertainment were offered.

Travel to the West was further facilitated by arrival of the railroads. In 1887 the Maricopa and Phoenix Railway Company began service to the Salt River Valley, followed by Santa Fe, Prescott and Phoenix rail service in 1895. The Southern Pacific Railroad Company came to Phoenix in 1926. These rail lines provided convenient links to cities in the Midwest and East and many visitors came to escape bitterly cold and wet winters. In addition the provision of a reliable water supply was critical to sustaining the community's viability after its initial settlement in the late 1800s.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, visitors seeking an environment for better health and comfort influenced tourism development in the West. Doctors, and residents alike, promoted the "ideal" winter climate found in the Southwest. Scott, believed the warm, dry desert air made it "God's Country" to the health seeker and early news accounts make mention of relief from ailments such as tuberculosis, asthma and consumption afforded by the local climatic conditions. Visitors from cold, congested urban areas were encouraged to come "where rain seldom falls and there is no cold."

Many health seekers came to Scottsdale, as the gateway to the Paradise Valley and the ranching districts of Cave Creek and the hills beyond. Those who were able to relocate to enjoy the advantage

of a change in climate, tended to be more well to do than other types of settlers. Their arrival in the area helped contribute in establishing its early culture and its later development as home to those appreciating the benefits of living in the desert.

Description

The residence is located south of McDowell Road on the west side of Hayden Road on a lot that is 175' wide and 180' deep, approximately .72 acres, on parcel #131-11-239, with alleys on the north and west side of the lot. Originally an isolated dwelling apart from any town center, the residence is now surrounded on the north, west and south by more recent residential construction, and a six-lane arterial street on the east with a Motorola office campus across Hayden Road. The UTM for the property is zone 12, 414280 easterly and 3706070 northerly.

This building is a one-story brick residence with a full basement. It is laid out in a rectangular plan with a full front porch and steeply pitched hip roof with one hipped dormer facing Hayden Road. A centrally located staircase leads to the wood front porch. The porch roof is supported by eight slender chamfered wood columns that are joined by a plain balustrade with nine square balusters per bay. The street façade facing east towards Hayden Road is three bays wide and has a central entry consisting of paired wooden doors topped by a single-pane transom. The symmetrical flanking bays feature paired one-over-one double-hung windows. Brick piers delineate the three bays and corner piers accentuate each corner. The piers support a narrow brick architrave that encircles the building below a shallow molded cornice encircling the building at the roofline.

The door and window openings are topped by projecting segmental arched brick window caps. The side elevations are both similar with brick piers delineating three major bays containing paired one-over-one windows with the projecting brick caps. Two brick stove chimneys are on the north and south roof slopes. The rear elevation to the west is also of similar design with brick piers and one-over-one windows with brick caps. The rear façade has a hipped dormer on the rear roof slope identical to the one facing the street and a third chimney. A clapboarded flat roofed addition extends from the rear elevation, circa 1960.

History

The building was completed in 1892 by Frank Titus, a wealthy railroad investor who moved to the Arizona Territory from San Francisco, CA. Frank Titus hired James Miller Creighton to design the house. This residence, and others designed by Creighton contemporaneous with the Titus House, illustrates the emergence of the first formal architect-designed homes in the Phoenix area. The one-story Titus House is more modest in scale and features than the high style two-story Queen Anne residences designed by Creighton in the Phoenix area. The bricks used on the Titus House were made from excavated clay on the property and their use is evidence of the transition away from traditional adobe construction.

Frank Titus settled on a 160-acre section of land in 1891 and established a citrus farm and horse-breeding ranch. The property was in a remote location ten miles east of Phoenix and about three miles from Winfield Scott's farm, located at the Arizona Canal to the north in what later became Scottsdale. The Wilford Hayden farm was nearby the Titus property.

Frank Titus was an executive with the Maricopa and Phoenix Railroad, opened in 1887. The rail line between Phoenix and the west coast was a factor in the growth of the Phoenix area during the late nineteenth century. Frank Titus was also one of three men appointed by the community of Scottsdale to serve on the first school board in 1896. At the time, Winfield Scott was making efforts to attract

new residents to the area to take advantage of agricultural opportunities and health-related amenities. The recent railroad system could bring emigrants from the east and west coasts and the railroads could bring a wider variety of building materials to the Phoenix area to furnish homes like the Titus House.

The house was owned by James Holmesley from 1909 to 1919, who raised cotton and cattle. Frank Stevenson bought the property in 1919 and acquired an additional 320 acres for cotton farming. Stevenson sold the home in 1950 and the residence is currently owned by Joseph and Frances Gatti. The acreage surrounding the home was sold and subdivided in the 1950's. The building has been in continuous use as a residence for over 100 hundred years but the agricultural uses are no longer in evidence in the surrounding neighborhood.

Significance

The Titus House is historically significant as the only remaining Victorian residence in Scottsdale. It represents an important historical link to the origins of Scottsdale's development and is related to the beginning of the Art Colony and Tourist Development context theme in the late nineteenth century. The design is the work of an important Arizona architect of the period, James Miller Creighton. The property's location illustrates the pattern of development for the Scottsdale settlement from its agricultural roots to a large diversified city more than a century later. The residence is an example of the formal architect-designed homes of the period that incorporate new stylistic preferences being introduced into the region. The intact design, materials and workmanship found on the building makes it an excellent example of the local Victorian architecture.