

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JUL 1 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Neil H. Gates House

and/or common El Estribo Lodge

2. Location

street & number 4602 N. Elsie Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Phoenix

N/A vicinity of

state Arizona

code 04

county Maricopa

code 013

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | N/A in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Charles H. Alberding/ purchase in process by Brent Turley and Steven Finch

street & number 9 E. Huron St./ 4602 N. Elsie Avenue

city, town Chicago/Phoenix

N/A vicinity of

state Illinois/Arizona

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Maricopa County Recorder's Office

street & number 111 S. Third Avenue

city, town Phoenix

state Arizona

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date

federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Summary/Context

The Neil H. Gates House is a two-story adobe residence built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1929. The stuccoed house is generally characterized by an asymmetrical facade, an irregular plan, and a variety of roof forms of varying heights, covered with mission tiles. Particularly notable features include the prolific use of French doors, a Spanish loggia and corredor, and a solarium.

The residence is located on a 1.5-acre lot in the foothills of Camelback Mountain, in what was once the unincorporated area of Arcadia. One of the area's major topographical features, Camelback Mountain lies in north-central Phoenix, the major metropolis of the Salt River Valley, in central Arizona. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Arcadia--which was then ten miles northeast of Phoenix, near the emerging community of Scottsdale--was developed as an exclusive residential and resort district in the picturesque, and then relatively pristine, desert, bounded by a lush citrus belt. The area remains one of the city's most prestigious residential areas.

The Gates House and its setting possess a high degree of architectural and landscape integrity.

Overview

The Neil H. Gates House, nestled high in the foothills of Camelback Mountain, provides a panoramic view of the Salt River Valley and its ring of mountain formations. From its open-air "roof gardens," one can behold a rare vista of Four Peaks and the Superstition Mountain range to the east, the San Tan Mountains to the southeast, the Salt River (South) Mountains to the south, and the Estrella Mountains to the southwest, as well as Camelback Mountain directly to the north.

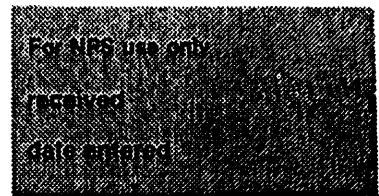
This picturesque Sonoran Desert setting is enhanced by the Spanish Colonial Revival design of the house, with Pueblo Revival undertones, and by the landscaping, which evokes an aura of the natural desert. The house site is bounded by a five-foot adobe wall along the northern perimeter and by a low cobblestone wall along the southern perimeter, between the courtyard and the swimming pool. It is lushly landscaped with bougainvillea, oleander, and citrus, palm, and alligator juniper trees. A cactus garden, with a fieldstone base, elevated at the center of an automobile turnabout east of the house, includes saguaro, prickly pear cactus, mesquite, and ocotillo. To the south of the house site, the land slopes down in a natural desert landscape of saguaro, barrel, cholla, ocotillo, and prickly pear cacti.

The Gates House design is well suited to this desert landscape. The site is slightly elevated, with a fieldstone wall along the base. The irregular plan, partially wrapped around a grassy courtyard to the south, gives the house a sculptural quality. From a poured concrete slab foundation, stucco-clad adobe walls rise two-stories in height. The sun-baked adobe bricks, set in a running bond with mud mortar, were made in the traditional fashion, with straw as the binder. The stucco sheathing is composed of lime plaster.

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The walls are sheltered by shed and flat roofs of varying heights. Flat roofs with parapet walls covering projecting wings at the southeast and northeast corners of the principal mass are sheathed with composition rolled sheets and serve as open-air "roof gardens." A similar flat roof covers the 1985 north addition. The shed roofs over the principal mass and the ca. 1958 north addition are clad with red clay, Spanish mission tiles. At the eaves, massive rafters are exposed to represent traditional vigas.

Among the most important visual features of the Gates House is the abundance of multiple-light windows and glazed doors. Large, wooden casement windows, glazed in a variety of patterns, pierce otherwise unadorned wall planes. In general, these window sashes are grouped in pairs, or they flank fixed, multiple-light sashes. The numerous exterior entryways--generally one or more at each room--are typically filled with paired, wooden French doors, divided by muntins into ten or twelve lights. The numerous windows and doors give the house an airy, light-filled appearance.

Furthermore, a striking aspect of the Gates House is the minimal use of applied ornamentation, a quality that both references the Spanish Colonial period and presages the minimalist architecture of the Modern period.

Detailed Description

The south elevation, while not the entry facade, actually serves as the primary facade of the house, as it faces Camelback Road and is the first elevation visible from the driveway (photo 1). Roughly L-shaped in plan, it is the most visually interesting face of the Gates House. It is also the facade that most clearly evokes the aura of the Spanish Colonial Revival period. The facade appears not to have been built as a multi-room whole; rather it seems to have grown as a series of independent rooms over the years, in keeping with Spanish Colonial architecture. The typical "L" plan creates a grassy courtyard, whose southern boundary is delineated by a low, cobblestone wall. The Spanish Colonial theme is further expressed by the full-length loggia on the second floor of the central block and the full-length corredor along the leg of the L, formed by the bedroom wing.

The two-story central block of the south elevation features a solarium/library at the first floor, created by a series of four pairs of French doors recessed into square openings. Each door is hinged at the mullions, making it possible to fold open the doors to create complete voids. The doors feature their original hardware. Above the solarium is a full-length loggia, closed at the west end, which serves as a sitting room for the upstairs bedrooms. The loggia is shaded by a clay-tiled, shed roof and has a wooden floor and tongue-and-groove ceiling. The cantilevered porch is supported by ornamental carved brackets and features a turned spindle balustrade, connected to the fascia with more massive turned columns and scroll brackets. (Photo 2)

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Wooden spindles also fill the opening that delineates a nook between the loggia and the open-air "roof garden" to the east (photo 3). Below this roof garden is the one-story, living room wing, which projects southward from the central block. Although part of the original construction, this wing visually appears to be an addition. The wing is dominated by a massive, tapered, centrally-placed exterior chimney, which is ornamented by an octagonal clay tile, presently obscured by vegetation. On either side of the chimney is a pair of twelve-light French doors.

To the west of the central block, the bedroom wing forms the leg of the L plan (photo 4). This one-story wing is shaded by a full-length corridor, with three large, square openings, mimicking the openings of the adjacent solarium. Exposed tongue-and-groove boards form the ceiling. Behind the corridor, multiple-light casement windows and single, ten-light French doors are placed directly opposite those at the west elevation, permitting an unobstructed view through the wing. The concrete floor of the corridor, scored to simulate clay tiles, features a running pattern of squares and paired diamonds, etched in the concrete and tinted in hues of lavender and salmon (photo 5). Above this wing is an open-air "roof garden." Exterior access to the roof garden is provided by a concrete staircase, bordered by a low adobe wall, at the southeast corner of the wing (photo 6).

The entry facade (east elevation) of the Gates House presents an asymmetrical assortment of building masses in a modified U plan (photo 7). The shed-roofed central block, two stories in elevation, is dominated by a massive gable-wall chimney, placed slightly off center. A flagstone walk, flanked by a pair of ceramic urns, leads to the main entry, reached by two low steps. The recessed, rectangular opening, offset to the south, is filled with a glazed batten door, which features its original hardware. Surmounting the entrance is an octagonal clay tile, providing the facade with its only applied ornamentation. The legs of the facade's U plan are formed by the sides of two, one-story wings of differing heights and rooflines, giving the east elevation an eclectic appearance. The south wing, enclosing the living room, is covered by a flat roof, while the north wing, somewhat more squat in appearance, is surmounted by a shed roof. Multiple-light, wooden casement windows, grouped in doublets and triplets, pierce the walls in an asymmetrical pattern. An original Craftsman light fixture is mounted at the northeast corner of the living room wing.

The north elevation consists of a series of one-story additions, built in three stages. The two-story central block, filled with a band of casement windows, rises in the background, creating a split-level appearance. The easternmost addition was constructed of concrete block ca. 1958 (photo 8). In 1985, this room was enlarged by extending

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the wall in a gentle curve to its intersection with the northwest corner of the central block (photo 9). The 1985 addition is sheltered by a flat roof and features an end chimney. Each of the two additions is dominated by a slightly recessed, central entry, filled with a pair of ten-light, wooden French doors. Wooden, multiple-light casement windows, in groupings of ones, twos and threes, are placed on either side of the entries. The third addition, to the west, was originally a small porch, shaded by a pergola. Ca. 1945, this was enclosed to create a utility room. The flat-roofed addition features a single, ten-light, French door entry, offset to the east, and a small, two-light, metal casement window on either side of a four-light, fixed sash. The jigsaw-cut rafter ends that formed the pergola are still intact.

The west elevation consists of a one-story bedroom wing, with a flat roof (photo 10). This elevation features two symmetrical, slightly recessed, offset entries, each with a single, ten-light, wooden French door. Each entry features an original Craftsman light fixture. Multiple-light, wooden casement windows fill the rooms with natural light. An exterior chimney is located at the north bedroom, and an interior chimney rises from the corner of the south bedroom.

The interior of the Gates House is noteworthy for its modern, open plan and its airy, light-flooded rooms. All of the rooms, with the exception of the bathrooms, feature exterior French doors, which couple with ribbons of multiple-light casement windows to create an open-air feeling. This quality is particularly notable in the solarium, whose south wall is formed by a bank of French doors (photo 11).

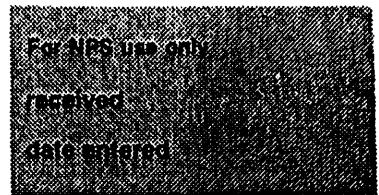
Throughout the house, the expression of materials and a restrained use of applied ornament, simultaneously Spanish Colonial and modern, create a dramatic effect. At the first floor, dressed concrete floors are scored to simulate clay tiles. At the edges, the concrete is coved to form the base molding. Second-story floors are of fir. Tongue-and-groove wooden ceilings supported by massive beams are found throughout the original portions of the house. In the living room, the solarium, and the dining room, these ceilings are especially handsome, with the wood-stained, tongue-and-groove boards laid in a dramatic herringbone pattern. The wooden ceiling and massive beams suggest the lattias and vigas of the Spanish Colonial period.

Each room, with the exception of the bathrooms and kitchen, features a fireplace, which originally provided the only source of heat. In the sunken living room (photo 12), the fireplace hearth is delineated by a border of glazed, polychrome, clay tiles embedded in the concrete floor (photo 13). Similar clay tiles, designed in various parlor game motifs, are found at the dining room hearth; this fireplace also features an elaborate hood.

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From the solarium, a dressed concrete staircase with a wrought-iron banister leads to the second floor. At the head of the landing, a pair of French doors opens onto the loggia. To the left of the landing is a small cupboard room, sensitively altered in 1985 to provide an interior doorway to the upstairs bedrooms. Although it was necessary to the right of the landing is a small office, complete with its original Mission style, built-in cabinetry (photo 14).

Other significant interior details include the original bathrooms, one between the upstairs bedrooms and two associated with the downstairs bedrooms. The original ceramic tile floors and walls, as well as many of the fixtures, are intact.

Outbuildings

To the west of the Gates House, a small, adobe archway links the house to a small, one-story, adobe guest house. One of its rooms is covered by a parapeted flat roof, the other by a mission-tiled, gabled roof, pitched low (photos 15 and 16). The guest house, presently in poor condition, features wooden and metal (nonoriginal) casement windows, wooden French doors, and exposed tongue-and-groove ceilings, supported by massive beams. The most unusual element at the guest house is a small incinerator abutting the chimney at the southwest corner, which heated water for the guest house.

Other outbuildings, of less significance, include a one-story, one-room guest house, constructed of stuccoed concrete block. This guest house, located to the west of the original guest house, was constructed for the El Estribo Lodge. A one-story, adobe garage, located northeast of the main house, is in very poor condition. The garage was built for Neil Gates sometime after the Gates House was built. During the El Estribo Lodge period, it was divided into two guest apartments; current plans call for its rehabilitation as a garage.

South of the main house is a concrete swimming pool, with an adjacent concrete block changing house. A shuffleboard court parallels the pool. These elements were added ca. 1950 for the El Estribo Lodge.

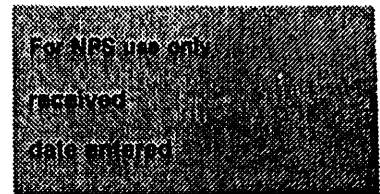
Alterations

During its use as a guest lodge, the Neil H. Gates House was significantly altered to accommodate its new use and to modernize its appearance. Wooden window sashes were replaced with metal casement sashes, the kitchen was removed, the north porch was enclosed, a north wing was added, bathrooms and partition walls were added, and fireplaces were covered up.

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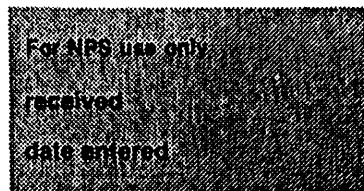
At present, the house is being rehabilitated to return it to use as a private residence. Great care has been taken to restore the original features of the house, while making it suitable for modern use. All of the nonoriginal partition walls have been removed and original interior openings have been restored, with only minor alterations. Deteriorated adobe walls have been repaired and restuccoed, following the Secretary of Interior's Standards. All but one of the added bathrooms have been removed, and the fireplaces have been restored. Metal window sashes have been replaced with wooden casement sashes, replicating the configuration of extant windows, and where necessary, new French doors have been fashioned to replicate the old.

On the north side of the house, a first-floor bathroom has been added, as has a kitchen (in its original location). The 1958 addition has been significantly enlarged with a curved wall to create one large room. Care was taken to make this room compatible, yet distinctive. In the interior, the Spanish Colonial aura created by the wooden ceilings has been continued, yet made distinctive through the use of light-colored wood, round in cross-section, rather than square. All alterations have been made following the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

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Neil H. Gates House Complex

| <u>Component</u> | <u>Const. Date</u> | <u>Merit</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Gates House | 1929 | Significant Contributor |
| Guest House | 1929 | Significant Contributor |
| Garage | ca. 1930 | Contributor |
| Pool and Changing House | ca. 1950 | Noncontributor |
| El Estribo Guest House | ca. 1950 | Noncontributor |

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1935 | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | | materials; development history | |
| Specific dates | Built 1929 | Builder/Architect | Neil H. Gates, architect & const. supv./ Evans Construction Co., builder | |

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary

The Neil H. Gates House is architecturally significant as an outstanding, intact example of the renaissance in adobe architecture that took place in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area during the late 1920s and 1930s. It is a rare example of an authentic revival of the Spanish Colonial style, combining adobe construction with Spanish Colonial Revival details. The residence is also significant as one of the earliest Phoenix houses designed to "bring the outdoors indoors," which soon became the quintessential quality of a truly "Arizona home." To a lesser extent, the Gates House is also noteworthy as one of the earliest residences built in the Camelback Mountain area of Arcadia.

Historical Background

In the earliest years of its settlement, the late 1860s through the 1870s, Phoenix was a village of small, adobe dwellings, resembling the traditional architecture of Mexico to the south. Adobe dwellings were well adapted to the arid climate and made of native materials using a relatively simple technology. Adobe bricks were manufactured in wooden molds out of mud, with straw, horsehair, or other binding elements, and left to bake in the sun.

By the mid-1880s, however, adobe houses gave way to ones of brick and frame construction, designed in the Victorian styles popular in the Eastern United States. In their effort to create a "civilized" community on the frontier and to divorce themselves from the "sleepy" image of Mexico and southern Arizona, the citizens of Phoenix sought to emulate the eastern and midwestern cities from whence they came. Phoenix was promoted as a "hustling and bustling city," with emphasis on its modern homes, built in the latest styles, and its garden-like setting of ash trees and roses. Newcomers arriving from midwestern towns, it was stressed, would immediately feel at home.

While the city's boosters were portraying Phoenix as an "all American" town, a regional artistic and literary movement was emerging, romanticizing the Spanish heritage and "noble" Pueblo Indians of the Southwest. By the 1920s, this movement was in full bloom.

In 1915, Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue expressed this artistic movement architecturally with his Spanish Colonial Revival designs executed for the Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego; in so doing, he legitimized Southwestern regional architecture. Builders in Phoenix responded with homes designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival idiom, as well as the Mission Revival and Pueblo Revival styles. By the latter half of the 1920s, regional designs dominated the city's neighborhoods, regardless of class.

(See continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.53 acres

Quadrangle name Paradise Valley

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 10, Glencoe Highlands, a subdivision recorded in Bk. 19, pg. 13, Maricopa County Recorder, in the SE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 21, T2N, R4E, Gila and Salt River Base and Meridian.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marsha L. Weisiger, architectural historian

Weisiger & Associates, for Brent Turley

organization and Steven Finch

date May 1986

street & number 221 West Glenhaven Drive

telephone (405) 732-8630

city or town Midwest City

state Oklahoma 73110

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Donna J. Scholer

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date June 23, 1986

For NPS use only

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

Linda McEllan

date 8/11/86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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In general, the allusion to Spanish precedent was restricted to a few carefully chosen details, such as arched openings, clay-tiled roofs, wrought iron grilles, and stucco cladding, added to otherwise conventional brick structures. It was not until the last years of the decade that regionalism came to be expressed in construction materials and building form, as well as ornamental detail.

Robert T. Evans: Adobe Revival Movement in Phoenix

In the late 1920s, there emerged a revival of interest in the use of adobe for constructing residences of regional design. In the Salt River Valley, this adobe renaissance began in Arcadia, an exclusive residential and winter resort area in the foothills of Camelback Mountain, which was then a rural desert and citrus region lying northeast of Phoenix. Soon the use of adobe spread to the emerging artists' colony in Scottsdale and to Phoenix' upper-, middle-, and lower-income neighborhoods. By the 1940s, however, interest in adobe construction waned.

The earliest adobe revival residence erected in Arcadia was probably Rancho Joaquina (NR 1984), designed in 1923 by the local architectural firm of Fitzhugh and Byron. Soon thereafter, a small adobe house, which was the core of what later became the Jokake Inn, was built by Robert T. Evans for his family.

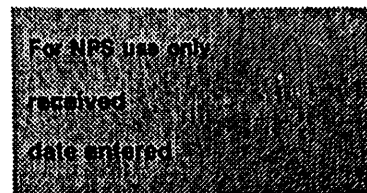
Robert T. Evans (1888-1962) came to Phoenix from Ohio in 1923, with his wife, Sylvia Gates Evans. While best known today as the cofounder (with his wife) of the Jokake Inn, one of the area's earliest Camelback Mountain resorts and, later, the founder of the Paradise Inn, Evans was a leading architect and builder for wealthy Phoenixians. He was a graduate of the Armour Institute of Technology, Chicago, with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, and he studied architecture at the University of Freiberg, Germany.

Although other Phoenix architects experimented with adobe, Evans was the most significant figure in the local renaissance of adobe residential architecture. About 1924, he founded the Evans Construction Company, serving both as architect and as construction supervisor.

The establishment of the Evans Construction Company coincided with a surge in the popularity of Phoenix as a winter home for eastern industrialists, lured by the exotic Southwestern desert. Fascinated with adobe as a construction material and capitalizing on his clients' notions of the romantic past, Evans designed and built regionally styled homes exclusively in adobe, maintaining a permanent crew of Mexican adobe brickmakers in Scottsdale.

To promote adobe construction, the Evans Construction Company published Adobe: A Magazine of Arizona Architecture during the 1930s. The monthly periodical had the effect of not only promoting Evans' business but also creating a widespread interest in adobe architecture throughout the Salt River Valley. It included articles praising the climatic and termite-resistant qualities of adobe, promotional pieces describing Evans' work, and literary selections extolling the legendary Southwest.

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Evans' clients included some of the most notable, and earliest, residents of Arcadia. He designed and built homes for George Mickle (1929), the Oeschelin Estate (1929), Duncan MacDonald (two houses: 1929 and 1931), Burrigge D. Butler (1931), Dr. C.C. Bradbury (1931), Louise Glaus (1931), Alfred Loveland (1931, demolished), G.T. Hubbard (1931), Horace Newhall (ca. 1931), Mildred and Bertha Pringle (1931), Jack Ryland (1931), Gertrude Webster (ca. 1931), John C. Lincoln (ca. 1933), Warren Tremaine (ca. 1936), Donald Kellog (ca. 1937; later the Casa Blanca Inn), and G. Tracy Hubbard (ca. 1937, demolished).¹ In addition to these Arcadia residences, Evans was responsible for several structures at the Arizona Biltmore, including the swimming pool, bath house, and stable; the Eisendrath House in Tempe²; the R.D. Roberts House in northwest Phoenix; the Charles Ainsworth House in the Country Club addition; and the Guy Lawrence House in north Phoenix. He was also responsible for the design, but not the construction, of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help church in Scottsdale. In 1934, as the architect for the Phoenix Subsistency Homestead Project, Evans designed an entire adobe subdivision for lower-income residents. In the 1940s, Evans abandoned architecture and turned to managing the Paradise Inn resort, which he built and founded.

Neil H. Gates: Period Revival Movement in Phoenix

One of the earliest residences built under the auspices of the Evans Construction Company was the house built for local architect Neil H. Gates, Evans' brother-in-law and associate. Designed and supervised by Gates for himself in 1929, the adobe, Spanish Colonial Revival house is particularly noteworthy for its climatically-adapted design. A forerunner of modern regional architecture, the Gates House was, nevertheless, unusually successful in evoking the picturesque charm of the Spanish Southwest.

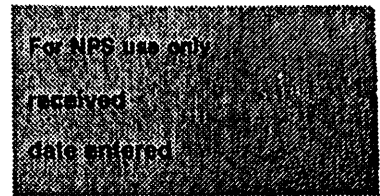
Neil Hurlbert Gates (1884-1971) came to Phoenix from Illinois in late 1928. Formerly the Secretary of the American Terra Cotta Company, over which his father presided, Gates had studied ceramics at Ohio State University. He also studied briefly at Taliesin East and studied architecture at the University of Illinois. Upon his arrival in Phoenix, Gates joined the Evans Construction Company, serving as an architectural designer. Within a year, the association was dissolved, and Gates established an independent architectural practice. It was during this association with the Evans Construction Company that the Gates House was designed and construction was begun. Before the house was completed, however, Gates was no longer associated with the company, and he continued to supervise the construction of his house himself.

Other Phoenix buildings designed by Gates, during his independent practice, were the Carter W. Gibbes House (NR 1983), the Scales House in Arcadia, the Elms House in the Arizona Biltmore area, and a Greek Orthodox church (demolished).³ In late 1931, in response to a severe building depression, Gates returned to Illinois; he later settled permanently in Altadena, California in 1937.

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The careful incorporation of historically accurate details in picturesque Period Revival residences was a hallmark of Gates' designs. His Tudor Revival expression designed for Carter W. Gibbes, for example, is notable for its careful allusion to an English manor house.

Architectural Significance

Architecturally, the Gates House is a locally outstanding example of a residence built in harmony with the environment, achieved by utilizing traditional elements of the Spanish Colonial style with unusual historical accuracy. When the house was built, before the advent of air conditioning, the thick walls of adobe brick, bound with the traditional straw, provided cool insulation during Arizona's hot, dry summers, and the incorporation of the Spanish corredor and loggia provided shade for the adjoining bedrooms. The natural desert setting and formal cactus garden further enhanced the aura of "organic architecture."

Because the house was designed by Gates for himself, without the compromises demanded by a client, it exemplifies Gates' philosophy toward Period Revival architecture. Historical authenticity is lent by the use of adobe and the period plan, as well as Spanish Colonial details, including minimal applied ornamentation, the extraordinary wooden beam ceilings, evoking traditional latias and vigas, and polished concrete floors scored to resemble tile.

Gates also sought, quite successfully, to create an "indoor-outdoor" lifestyle through design. The Spanish Colonial floor plan forced residents outside through the course of the day, as access to the upstairs bedrooms could be obtained only through the open-air loggia, and entrance to the west-wing bedrooms was through the open-air corredor or the exterior doors to the west. At the same time, Gates "brought the outdoors indoors" with undraped, expansive windows and French doors. Particularly noteworthy was the narrow solarium created by filling the library wall along the rear courtyard with multiple groupings of French doors. This architectural feature soon became synonymous with Arcadia architecture. Additional elements important in creating an indoor-outdoor ambiance were the wide loggia, which functioned essentially as the sitting room for the upstairs bedrooms, and the building's orientation around a rear courtyard.

A number of decorative features relate to Gates' association with the American Terra Cotta Company, including the urns found at the entry walk, manufactured by the company, and the ceramic tiles found at the exterior and at the fireplace hearths in the living and dining rooms.

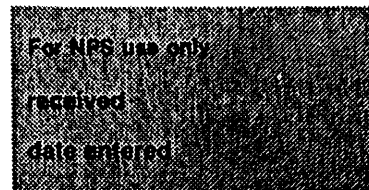
Historical Significance

In addition to its architectural significance, the Neil H. Gates House is notable as one of the earliest residences built in Arcadia, which soon became the most prestigious residential and resort area for the Valley's wealthy residents. The house was built in 1929 near the Jokake Inn. It was not until about 1931 that development in Arcadia began to boom, as the area became a mecca for winter visitors seeking the rustic simplicity of the romantic Southwestern desert.

(See continuation sheet)

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In the late 1940s, the Gates House was converted into an exclusive guest lodge, known as the El Estribo. Alterations made during that period have since been reversed, and the building is being carefully restored for use as a residence.

The Neil H. Gates House, therefore, meets the National Register criteria for significance as a result of its use of adobe in an outstanding Spanish Colonial Revival design and its integrity. It is particularly noteworthy for its association with the locally important Period Revival architect, Neil H. Gates, and the area's most prominent adobe revival builder, the Evan's Construction Company. It is also significant as a particularly notable, early "Arizona House" and as an early residence in the Arcadia area.

Notes

¹Unless otherwise noted, it was not possible to establish the continued existence of these Evans Construction Company properties, due both to the absence of street addresses at the time of their construction and to the public inaccessibility of many Arcadia properties.

²The Eisendrath House was determined eligible for the National Register in 1984 as part of the Tempe MRA, due to its Pueblo Revival design in adobe.

³It was not possible to confirm the continued existence or nonexistence of the Scales House or the Elms House.

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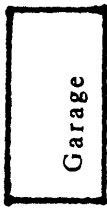
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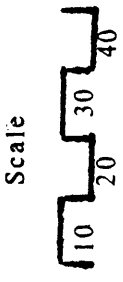
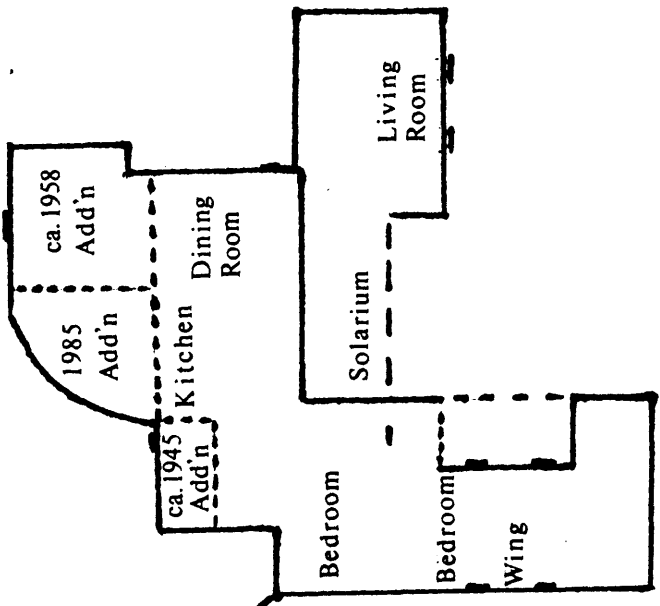
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El Estribo
Guest
House

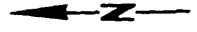


Guest
House

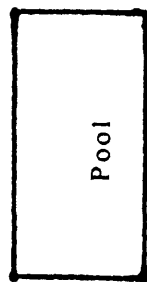


Scale

Outbuildings not
to scale



Changing
House



Pool

Neil H. Gates House