NPS Form 10-900-b
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

_X_ New Submission ___ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis

B. Associated Historic Contexts

The Residential Architecture and Construction History of George Ellis in Southern Arizona, circa 1937 to 1955

C. Form Prepared by

name/title: Pat Haigh Stein/Owner
organization: Arizona Preservation Consultants
street & no.: 6786 Mariah Drive
city or town: Flagstaff state: AZ
date: December 1998
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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James W. Garrison AZSHPO — 27 JULY 1999
Signature and title of certifying official — Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall — 9/3/99
Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

E. Statement of Historic Context

INTRODUCTION

This multiple property documentation provides a framework for nominating to the National Register the residential properties designed by George Ellis in southern Arizona, circa 1937 to 1955. Mr. Ellis was a construction engineer by training and entrepreneur by nature whose passion was residential architecture. He was a generation ahead of many contemporaries in his organic approach to design: his buildings used environmental conditions to good advantage, enhanced the beauty of their desert surroundings, and favored local materials. His adobe designs helped revive local interest in earthen architecture. Collaborating with Frank Lloyd Wright on the Pauson house in Phoenix, Ellis refined Wright's Usonian concepts yet developed a style distinctly his own to bring handsome, well-built, comfortable homes of moderate cost to many Arizonans. The strongest expression of Ellis' work occurred in a neighborhood called Cattle Track, where his designs formed the core of Scottsdale's historic artists' community.

Historic Context: The Residential Architecture and Construction History of George Ellis in Southern Arizona, circa 1937 to 1955

George Lewis Ellis was born in Wellington, Kansas, on January 20, 1907. During high school in San Antonio, Texas, he became a skilled land surveyor, working summers and weekends for local engineering firms. After studying engineering at the University of Virginia and Texas A&M, he worked for the Brown & Root Construction Company in the design and construction of highways, bridges, and dams. Then, as Civilian in Charge of Engineering at Randolph Field, Texas, he helped build the "West Point of the Air." In the early 1930s Ellis first arrived in Arizona as a surveyor for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. After an assignment from 1933 to 1935 directing Federal work relief projects on all of Southern California's Indian reservations, Ellis returned to Arizona to settle permanently.

Northeast of Phoenix in an area known as Scottsdale, Ellis in 1937 purchased a strip of undeveloped desert adjacent to the Arizona Canal. He paid only $10 for the 16.15 acres -- inexpensive even by 1930's standards -- because the tract lay on the wrong side of the canal for irrigation, yet would flood when the canal overflowed its banks. The engineer looked beyond the problems of the land to the assets it possessed. Its mesquite vegetation could provide shade from sweltering summer heat. Its location at the base of a natural funnel between Camelback and Mummy mountains created a constant west-to-east breeze that could cool the structures he would build.

An engineering mishap provided the fortuitous circumstance that helped Ellis build his first home. By the mid 1930s the Phoenix-Verde River pipeline that carried water through Scottsdale to Phoenix leaked so badly that it was declared abandoned. Known as the "Big Redwood Line," the pipeline was constructed of redwood staves measuring two inches thick by sixteen feet long. By digging holes down to the pipe, crawling through it, and freeing the redwood staves from metal bands that held them, Ellis salvaged about a quarter-mile of the line. He stockpiled some of the harvest and used the rest to build a home: a one-room cottage with porch, adorned at the gable end with a howling coyote sculpture (Figure 1). He left the redwood in a rough-hewn state, still bearing the marks of the metal bands that once bound the pipeline together. The simple cottage bore little resemblance to Ellis' later, more sophisticated designs, yet began a theme that would be repeated in subsequent works: the use of redwood as a major character-defining element.

The little redwood cottage served as home base for George's expanding ventures. He and Mort Kimsey started an adobe brickyard on Kimsey's farm east of the Arizona Canal, across from the Ellis property. Their first job was to provide adobes for the Camelback Inn, designed in 1936 by Edward Loomis Bowes and constructed in 1937 for Jack Stewart on the southern slope of Mummy Mountain. Ellis was familiar with adobe construction through his years in Texas; the Camelback project rekindled his interest in the subject and brought him in contact with builders and artists such as Bowes, Robert Evans, and Alonzo "Lon" Megargee who promoted the revival of earthen architecture in the Phoenix area.

X See Continuation Sheet

The brickyard gave Ellis working capital and construction material to fuel his interest in home-building. He developed two acres within the southern end of his 16.15-acre tract and two acres within its northern end. In the summer of 1938, Bruce Folsom bought the northern parcel, Beryl Simpson the southern one. Each arranged for $2500 mortgages to have Ellis design and build them houses, the first adobes to qualify for FHA financing through the Phoenix branch of the Valley National Bank. For each, George Ellis created a one-story structure of contemporary design that featured unplastered, 14- to 18-inch thick walls; redwood trim and custom cabinetry; extremely low-pitched, gabled roofs; wide eave overhangs with exposed rafter ends, and details such as corner windows. The Folsom house was further distinguished by a 14-foot wooden beam that George salvaged from a nearby bridge and installed as an entryway lintel. In the case of the Simpson house, the homeowner-to-be participated in construction by working alongside Ellis' crew (Figure 2). Using proceeds from the Folsom and Simpson projects, Ellis drilled a well on his property to provide water for himself and the new neighbors.

Ellis purchased acreage west of his land and began to develop it by building a house with approximately three acres for John and Virginia Platt. Mrs. Platt would continue to reside in the house until 1998 when the property was sold for development and the house torn down. Around the same time (November of 1938), Ellis sold some of the land to his future in-laws, John R. and Myrtle Murdock, and their son, David.

In December of 1938, George married Rachael Murdock, a Scottsdale schoolteacher who shared George's love of design. Rachael had worked for Albert Chase McArthur in the late 1920s when he designed the Arizona Biltmore Hotel; so keen was her taste for architecture that she once named her cats "Lescher" and "Mahoney" in a tongue-in-cheek tribute to Arizona's preeminent architectural firm.

George and Rachael Ellis began to expand their redwood cottage to accommodate a family that would eventually include two sons and a daughter. In their home, George perfected design elements that would become trademarks of the Ellis style (Figures 3 to 5). Preserving the original redwood home as a living room, George added rooms to form a residence with a zoned "saddlebags" plan; a bedroom zone at the north end was separated from a daytime kitchen/living zone at the south end by means of a central, roofed, and screened breezeway. All rooms were of redwood. Some were open clear to the roofline, with exposed rafters and beams. Other rooms had unusually low ceilings and narrow doors designed to funnel breezes and naturally cool the house. Within zones, interior space flowed from room to room in a seamless and pleasing pattern. Rooms were naturally well-lit with strings of horizontal wooden slider windows and windows tucked beneath gable ends. Red-colored concrete floors were poured last; Ellis learned to curve their edges up evenly and gracefully at wall junctures to form baseboards continuous with flooring. He gave redwood cabinetry elegance and distinction by repeating the same handle pattern: a simple lath, running the full length or width of the cabinet, and beveled 30 degrees on the underside to accommodate the fingers. Many of the same design elements would be expressed in the Ralph Kirkman house, built in 1939 on a parcel west of the Ellis place. The Kirkman house featured a zoned, L-shaped plan; low-pitched, gabled roofs; glazing tucked in gable ends; massive chimneys with corner or cantilevered fireplaces; horizontal wooden sliding windows as well as corner windows; unplastered adobe walls; and redwood trim and cabinetry.

As urban sprawl approached his neighborhood, Ellis preserved a pocket of country life. Houses of the Ellis neighborhood had deep setbacks to afford privacy, and were oriented not always to the street but rather to the lay of the land and its natural assets. There were no curbs, gutters, sidewalks, or street lights, and the main, north-south road was two-track and unpaved. Ellis and his neighbors spurned non-native, water-consumptive landscaping in favor of drought-hardy species of the Sonoran Desert; they planted native paloverde from seedlings and saw many grow to maturity. Desert wildlife frequented the neighborhood and canal, while Rachael's greyhounds kept snakes and coyotes at bay.

George Ellis was intrigued by the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and would soon collaborate with him. The architect had visited Phoenix in the late 1920s when Albert Chase McArthur, a former student, was working on the Biltmore. At

that time, Wright was approached by Dr. A. J. Chandler to design a luxury hotel in the desert south of Phoenix. Although "San Marcos in the Desert" was never built to Wright's specifications, the architect did erect "Ocotillo," a temporary, board-and-canvas field camp near the proposed hotel site. In the winter of 1937-1938 Wright returned to Arizona to found Ocotillo's successor, Taliesin West, a campus-like community northeast of Phoenix that would remain Wright's winter headquarters for 21 years.

When he founded Taliesin West, Wright, then in his seventies and late in his career, was grappling with what he termed "the small house problem": the challenge of providing America with moderate-cost housing in an era of rapid urbanization and population growth. His ideas on the subject would evolve into an architectural grammar, or way of building, known as Usonian architecture. It included open planning in the living areas; small bedrooms, well equipped with built-in cabinets and closets; and zoning of the floorplan to maximize whatever spaciousness a small home might have. Usonian homes could be expanded easily and were made according to a method of construction that eliminated finishing trades and decoration, revealing the materials of which the homes were made. Wright's first Usonian home was the Jacobs House, completed in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1936.

Wright's chance to apply the concept of economy in home construction to the Sonoran Desert occurred in 1938 when Rose Pauson, a San Franciscan, asked him to design a home near the Biltmore. The Pauson family was well-to-do, but Rose set a stringent budget for the building including architect's fee: $7500. For Pauson, the house was to be a vacation get-away rather than a full-time residence. By March of 1938 Wright was actively engaged in developing plans, but by summer of the following year, he and Taliesin Fellow Robert Mosher were still negotiating with the client to accept the design. It was about that time that Wright and Ellis met. Ellis kept a gasoline pump on his property for agricultural use. Wright would often stop by the Ellis place on his way between Phoenix and Taliesin West, and would tell his acolytes to pump gas from the private reserve while he remained in his car. The architect noticed the buzz of activity in the Ellis neighborhood and soon became acquainted with its builder.

Rose Pauson was as cautious a client as she was thrifty. When she still had not forwarded funds to begin work by January, 1940, Wright sent Pauson a letter expressing dissatisfaction:

> What is the matter? You have broken the spirit of the Fellowship and set aside something you can not afford to miss. Your little house was the darling of our hearts and enough creative energy went into getting it done over and over again to build a battleship...We are prepared to give you a house complete including architect's fees and help with the furnishings -- the dining table, chairs and cases, wardrobes, bookshelves, etc., also included for $7,500.00. We can do this by our proximity to the work ourselves and the volunteering of a good builder here named Ellis. He is prepared to give you a bond for faithful performance to our entire satisfaction. We would pitch in and help him out if we saw him in danger of getting stuck. But he too is in love with the house and willing to work chiefly for his experience in building it (Frank Lloyd Wright, cited in Pfeiffer 1986:193).

Ms. Pauson found the plea cogent and forwarded funds. Construction proceeded in 1940 and 1941. From Wright's plans, Ellis built a masterpiece straddling a rocky desert hilltop. From the entry/carport at the foot of the hill, long, low steps approached the building in a dramatic sweep. The head of the walkway plunged through the house and emerged as a balcony overlooking the far side. A double-height living room held a fully-glazed directional view off the hillcrest to the desert and mountains beyond. Walls were of masonry, laid in a fashion Wright had innovated two years before at Taliesin West; native stones were placed in wooden forms having battered sides and then poured with concrete. Redwood trim, ample built-ins, and lapped board parapets completed the look. Because of its strong physical resemblance to a battleship, and perhaps because of Wright's 1940 allusion to one (see quotation above), the Pauson house was nicknamed "Ship Rock."

The nickname came to represent problems that beset contractor Ellis and ultimately Ship Rock itself. Wright made costly changes to the site plan but would not ask his client for more money. Her budget of $7500 proved woefully inadequate for the 3,600-square-foot house that was actually built. Ellis became caught between the client and architect holding a tight hand on the budget, and suppliers and subcontractors demanding payment for Wright's costly changes. The wealthy Ms. Pauson certainly had the means to reimburse Ellis, but did not. Wright would not press the point because he had promised her a complete house, including his fee, for $7500. Ellis considered placing a lien on Ship Rock but was dissuaded by attorneys. The case finally went to arbitration and was decided in Wright and Pauson's favor, with Ellis ordered to pay the suppliers and subcontractors. He raised the money by mortgaging his own property. Rachael Ellis estimates that it took George about 15 years and $15,000 to pay for Wright's "$7500" project.

The Pauson house proved to be the first and last project on which Wright and Ellis collaborated. It burned just two years after its completion when a renter left a fireplace unattended and a spark ignited a nearby curtain. Nearly a decade would pass before Wright would build another residence in Arizona, the Raymond Carlson house in Phoenix (1950). Additional Usonians then appeared in quick succession in the Phoenix area, with the Pieper house (1952), David Wright house (1952), Bomer house (1953), Adelman house (1953), and Price house (1954).

George Ellis meanwhile remained active in the local building trade. Moreover, his 1940s designs showed an unmistakable Wrightian influence. In his Scottsdale neighborhood in 1940, Ellis designed and built a residence each for his father-in-law and brother-in-law, John and David Murdock, respectively. The main design motif of these homes consisted of walls and interior partitions constructed by alternating three courses of adobes with a single course of redwood (Figures 6 to 11). This technique produced a striking architecture that obviated any need for plaster or other finishing. In *visual effect* although not materials, the walls and partitions of the Murdock houses strongly resembled the board-and-batten walls of the Jacobs home and the board-and-canvas walls of Ocotillo. Like much of Wright's residential work, Ellis' houses for the Murdocks featured roofs of extremely low pitch, rooms open clear to roof rafters, zoning of interior space, extensive glazing, ample built-ins, and custom furniture of angular design.

In 1941 Ellis executed a variation on this theme when he designed and built the Dr. M. W. Westervelt house in the Campo Allegre neighborhood of Tempe. The FHA-financed home was not of adobe but red brick, built using "ideal wall construction" techniques of the early twentieth century. The brickwork alternated single headers on end with single footers on end in a 1/3-lap pattern, creating hollow, insulating spaces in the core of each wall. The Westervelt house merged late Craftsman and early California Ranch styles (Figure 12) with Ellis trademarks: long horizontal lines that held the eye; low elevations that hugged the earth; walls that required no plastering or other finishing; redwood trim that provided decoration through hue and texture; some rooms open clear to the rafters, others with unusually low ceilings; Ellis-style cabinetry suited to the hand; and beautiful red concrete floors, poured as a final step in construction.

With the Westervelt house, Ellis began a business practice he would continue in later years. Not a licensed architect himself, Ellis arranged to have an architect affix a seal and sign off on the plans -- an illegal but not uncommon practice in Arizona in the 1940s and 1950s. Therefore, the name of C. Louis Kelley rather than George Ellis appears on the blueprints as architect of record for the Westervelt property. The fact that Ellis entered into such arrangements with architects means that some of his work has gone unrecognized.

By the early 1940s, seven families lived in Ellis' own neighborhood in Scottsdale. World War II touched the life of each. Beryl Simpson joined the WACS; Bruce Folsom joined the Signal Corps. David Murdock was an Infantry Officer with invasion troops and the 7th Infantry. The John Murdocks went to Washington, where John served as a U. S. Congressman. The houses of these families were rented mostly to Army Air Corps personnel who trained pilots at Thunderbird Field, north of Scottsdale. For his part, George Ellis contributed to the war effort by serving as Civilian Field Engineer at Williams Air Field in nearby Chandler.

Despite a busy schedule in Chandler, Ellis initially found time during the war years to continue building homes. Northwest of his home he designed and constructed two adobe houses on Lincoln Drive, one for the Hipps family and the other for the Kipp family. South of his place he constructed an adobe house, stable, and riding ring for rodeo star and trick rider Dick Griffith. With his own family growing and other pursuits evolving, Ellis also changed the function of some outbuildings on his own property. Most notably, in 1944-1945 he chased some horses and cows from his redwood barn, moved the structure a short distance north, and converted it into a small rental unit complete with bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and small living room. To protect the rental from floodwaters of the Arizona Canal, Ellis built an exterior retaining wall using the "desert masonry" materials and techniques Wright had pioneered at Taliesin West and the Pauson house. Ellis added similar retaining walls to other properties along the canal, including the Griffith, Simpson, and Folsom places.

In the late 1940s, artist Philip Curtis moved into Ellis' barn-turned-rental-unit. It was Curtis who helped Ellis name the adjacent street that would give their neighborhood its moniker. Variously called Miller Road, 76th Street, and Lutes Drive, "Cattle Track" seemed more appropriate and colorful because the street marked a long-established route that ranchers used to drive their livestock between winter and summer pasturage. One year the Ellises were shocked to receive a tax bill stating they owned 1,500 sheep. Since he in fact owned no sheep, George questioned the bill; the assessor swore that his field agent had seen the animals and counted them himself. The truth finally dawned: a Basque shepherd taking his flock north happened to be camped by the Arizona Canal when the field agent visited and erroneously attributed the sheep to the Ellises. George was torn between having people think he was a successful rancher with 1,500 sheep and getting the woollies removed from his assessment. It took the Ellises years to rectify the situation.

At Cattle Track, George Ellis created not only a neighborhood of beautiful homes but also a community of kindred spirits. The latter occurred not by design -- George and his wife never fancied themselves to be social engineers -- but by natural processes. The Ellises' eclectic interests and magnetic personalities attracted neighbors active in the creative and performing arts. David Murdock was a composer/musician. Beryl Simpson was head of dramatic arts at Arizona State University. Philip Curtis, an accomplished painter, became known as "dean of Arizona artists." Other artists/performers who resided in the neighborhood at various times included Russ Lyon, band director turned realtor; Fred Kueffner, a European craftsman; ceramicist Nick Bernard; poet Patricia Benton; Cowboy Hall of Famer Dick Griffith; Disney cartoonist Don Barkley; musicians and teachers Monte and Cora Lee Machell; and architect Bennie Gonzales. With encouragement from Ellis, many developed studios on their properties, eliminating the commute between living and work places. The arts community founded by the Ellises continues at Cattle Track today -- the neighborhood is often called Scottsdale's "West Bank." Individuals who currently reside or have studios there include Curtis, artist Fritz Scholder, architect Vernon Swaback, choreographer Janie Ellis, costume designer Rachael Ellis, painter and former gallery owner Avis Read, metalworker Bill Smith, artist Mark McDowell, and designer Bill Tull. Cattle Track also became home to leading patrons of the arts. For example, Sandra Kempner (associated with the Griffith house) led the effort to form a trust to sponsor Phil Curtis when he was still a struggling artist; her magnanimous effort gave Curtis income at a critical point in his career and directly contributed to his subsequent success.

Ellis remained active in the home-building profession during the late 1940s and early 1950s. One of his finest works during this period was "Crescent Moon Ranch," designed and built in 1948 for Lois Kellogg Maury at Pinnacle Peak north of Scottsdale (Figure 13). The house featured adobe construction (18-inch walls and 12-inch partitions), a low-pitched, cross-gabled plan with insulated shake roofing, redwood built-ins, flagstone and colored concrete floors, extensive glazing with panoramic views, spacious enclosed and open terraces, a lily pool in the living room, three guest cottages, and an eight-stall barn. Located on 127 acres, the property listed for the princely sum of $155,000 in 1953. The residence continued to grace the Pinnacle Peak foothills until 1997, when a developer demolished it to make way for new construction. Also in the late 1940s and early 1950s Ellis designed and/or helped build homes for Eleanor Altman in Tucson (the Christopher Square Studio, 1948); Mark Twain Clements near Florence; John Bonnell and Dale Messick, both in Scottsdale; the Bramble, Dickenson, and Daley families at Cattle Track; and a few clients in the Campo Allegre

neighborhood of Tempe. Ellis also worked with architect Paul Schweikher to build the Louis C. Upton house featured in the December, 1950, issue of *House and Garden* magazine. The extravagant Scottsdale home devolved into a speakeasy before it was accidentally demolished.

During the time he was building houses, Ellis farmed 80 acres where Scottsdale's Hilton is now located and also maintained a citrus orchard across the street from that land. His creative drive found new expression in the 1950s and 1960s. With his wife Rachael he opened a restaurant in the downtown gallery area that would become Scottsdale's toney Craftsman's Court. In north Scottsdale he cleared six sections of land for his agricultural business, called Desert Paradise Farms, and became one of the first farmers in Arizona to use an overhead sprinkler system that conserved water. In 1960 he acquired the Caribbean Boat Company. Operating under that name in the outbuildings at his home, he designed and manufactured fiberglass products ranging from stretchers for burn victims to hulls for racing boats. The shop produced the fiberglass car body that carried Mario Andretti to victory in the 1969 Indianapolis 500.

George Ellis died on March 28, 1971, at the age of 64 (Figure 14). Although he accomplished much in many fields, he is best remembered as the designer-builder of handsome and comfortable homes. His buildings enliven the senses but never intrude on them. Their gentle, single-story profiles dominated by crisp horizontal lines captivate the eye. There is an engaging honesty in the way each wall is worked; one can see and feel almost each board, every adobe or fired brick used in an Ellis house. Extensive glazing, breezeways, and terracing sharpen the sensation of being in the Sonoran Desert, while wide overhangs provide shade from the harshest summer sun. Redwood and adobe impart the scents of forest and earth. And inside, space is subtly manipulated -- with low ceilings and playfully small doorways -- to make a person of average stature feel a little larger than life.

F. Associated Property Types

i. **Name of Property Type**: Residential Properties

ii. **Description**: A residential property is defined within this submission as a property designed by George Ellis primarily for domestic purposes. The category includes not only houses but also, commonly, houses associated with studios/workshops. Ellis' construction of houses-with-studios stemmed from his belief that a home should include ample space for creative endeavors; his clientele also demanded this amenity. In some cases -- best exemplified by the Ellis family compound in the Cattle Track neighborhood of Scottsdale -- the family's studio/workshop and its house were separate buildings. In several cases -- exemplified by Eleanor Altman's home in Tucson and Philip Curtis' home at Cattle Track -- Ellis combined the functions of living and working under one roof. Through time, Ellis converted some workshops and studios to houses, and *vice versa*.

George Ellis most often worked in adobe but also designed buildings using fired brick or redwood as the main material. Whether of adobe, brick, or redwood, his buildings derived much of their beauty from their clean, simple lines, with walls requiring no plaster or other finishing (plaster *was* sometimes used on interior bathroom and kitchen walls). A major trademark of the Ellis style was the extensive use of redwood, in a rough-hewn or finished state, for exterior and interior trim. Other features of Ellis buildings were: single-story designs; strong horizontal lines; extremely low-pitched roofs with wide eave overhangs; zoning of interior space, with breezeways separating social from private spaces; a flowing arrangement of rooms within zones; strings of horizontal, wooden sliding windows; red-colored concrete floors with integral concrete baseboards; rooms with low ceilings as well as ones open clear to the roof rafters; corner fireplaces; corner windows; low, narrow doorways; gable ends with glazing; and redwood "Ellis-style" cabinetry, with handles consisting of laths running the full length or width of the cabinet and beveled on the underside to fit the hand.

iii. **Significance**: The residential architecture of George Ellis is significant under Criterion C at the local level because it embodies an important type and method of construction in southern Arizona. Ellis was a generation ahead of many contemporaries in his organic approach to design; his buildings used the environment to good advantage, enhanced the beauty of their Sonoran Desert surroundings, and favored local materials. His adobe buildings helped revive local interest in earthen architecture. Although Ellis designed striking homes for the well-to-do, he brought equally well-built and handsome housing to people of modest means. Borrowing and refining Frank Lloyd Wright's concepts, Ellis successfully brought Usonian-inspired houses to Arizonans before Wright did. Central to the Ellis esthetic was a belief that the homeplace should include ample space for creative activities. This belief, plus the energy and magnetism of the Ellis family, molded Ellis' own neighborhood into Scottsdale's historic arts community. Ellis embodied the notion that architecture is a social art.

iv. **Registration Requirements**: For a residential property to be eligible within the context established in this documentation, it must possess the following qualities:

- The property must have been designed by George Ellis. The fact that Ellis sometimes arranged for licensed architects (including C. Louis Kelley and A. J. Knapp) to affix their names to his plans means that some of his work may go unrecognized. To attribute a building to Ellis correctly, the researcher should carefully consider the design and details of the building in question, should conduct archival research and interviews, and should not rely on blueprints alone to determine the name of the designer.
- The property must be greater than fifty years old.
- The property must retain trademarks of the Ellis style on at least the exterior and preferably on the interior as well. Additions to the building are acceptable if compatible with the original style. Modern alterations must not mask the general style and majority of character-defining elements of the original structure. For example, changing a low-pitched Ellis roof to medium or high pitch would be unacceptable, as it would destroy a major character-defining element. On the other hand, retaining the original pitch of the roof but *sheathing* the roof with modern material would be more acceptable, since Ellis roofs are so low-pitched that their exterior surfaces are barely visible from grade. However, applying sheathing *to walls* would not be acceptable, as Ellis intended the structural materials of those walls to be major design elements of his buildings. A notable exception occurs in the case of concrete and plaster skirts. Ellis sometimes found it necessary to apply such elements to exterior

walls to prevent basal erosion on adobe buildings. Historic photographs indicate that he used this technique to stabilize walls as early as 1946 (see Figure 6). Therefore, application of such a skirt to an Ellis building would be acceptable and would not adversely affect a building's integrity.

Several Ellis buildings have been moved, usually to save them from demolition. A moved Ellis building may qualify for listing if the following special conditions apply. It must have been moved within the neighborhood for which it was originally built; it must have been adaptively reused in a manner consistent with its original use; and, most importantly, it must have retained its original, major character-defining elements. Integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and setting are of primary importance and sufficient to qualify Ellis buildings for listing under Criterion C.

G. Geographical Data

The geographical area covered by this multiple property listing is southern Arizona -- specifically Maricopa, Pinal, and Pima counties -- where George Ellis is known to have designed and built residences. Ellis once began a log cabin at Hochderffer Ranch in Coconino County (northern Arizona), but that building was never completed and so is not potentially included in this multiple property listing. Residential work outside of Maricopa, Pinal, and Pima counties is neither known to Ellis family members nor listed on George Ellis' resume. In the event that future research discovers Ellis-designed residences in other Arizona counties, then this multiple property listing may be amended accordingly.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The George Ellis family initiated this study when family members invited the consultant to visit Scottsdale's Cattle Track neighborhood, for which they hoped a National Register district nomination could be prepared. Following a reconnaissance-level survey of Cattle Track, the consultant conferred with the State Historic Preservation Office/SHPO Architect (Robert Frankeberger) and concluded that a district nomination would not be viable because Cattle Track had experienced modern infill, some Ellis residences there had lost integrity and, consequently, a majority of buildings in the neighborhood could no longer be considered contributors to a historic district. The consultant also learned that George Ellis had designed and constructed a significant number of residences at additional Arizona locations. Given these factors, the consultant and SHPO Architect concurred that residential properties designed by George Ellis would best be addressed through a multiple-property approach.

The study aimed to define "the Ellis style," refine the chronology of Ellis' work, and detect the types of changes his buildings had commonly undergone. The consultant interviewed the widow and the daughter of George Ellis, reviewed published and unpublished material on Ellis' works, accessed land records, and studied a wealth of material (including blueprints, preliminary drawings, numerous photographs, and written sources) in the Ellis family archives. Buildings within the Ellis family compound at Cattle Track were intensively surveyed. Other buildings in that neighborhood and in greater Scottsdale were surveyed at a reconnaissance level. Buildings outside Scottsdale were studied through photographs and blueprints but not visited. The consultant contacted historic preservation officers in Tempe and Tucson to determine if any Ellis residences known to have been built in those cities had been identified; as yet, they had not been. The consultant also checked the SHPO's "Historic Property Inventory" to see if any buildings outside of Cattle Track were attributed to George Ellis; none were.

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