

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Ponderosa II  
Other names/site number: Lorne Greene's Ponderosa; Ponderosa Replica  
Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)  
N/A

### 2. Location

Street & number: 602 S. Edgewater Drive  
City or town: Mesa State: AZ County: Maricopa  
Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local  
Applicable National Register Criteria:  
X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

Kathleen Leece 7 May 2018  
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date  
State Historic Preservation Office/Arizona State Parks and Trails  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
Signature of commenting official: Date  
Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

6/25/18  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>2</u>	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>3</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling=House  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling=House  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Ranch Style

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood/Cedar Shake/Stone (granite)

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Ponderosa II is a single-family residence in the City of Mesa, Arizona (Figure 1). The house was constructed in 1962-63 as part of the former Apache Country Club Estates subdivision, now referred to as Golden Hills, an active-living adult community developed during the 1960s. The house is located on a prominent lot adjacent to the community's golf course. It is one story and constructed of wood frame on concrete slab. Exterior elevations are different types of wood: half-split logs on the primary façade, board-and-batten on the rear facades, and horizontal wood siding on the garage and bedroom wings. Although one story in height, a decorative window in the front façade gable gives the appearance of a second floor. This is complemented on the interior with a stairway to a faux second story door. Primary interior features include two large stone fireplaces and a continuation of the rustic theme with a wood floor, and wood and log walls. The Ponderosa II is a Ranch Style house constructed as a seasonal residence for actor Lorne Greene, star of the popular television series *Bonanza*. It was designed to closely replicate the fictional Ponderosa ranch house, thus its name Ponderosa II. The house is an elaboration of the typical Ranch Style house plan, which is referred to in architectural history literature as a Character Ranch or a Styled Ranch. In this subcategory of Ranch Style, exterior decoration returned to what was once a simplified residential form from the 1940s and early 1950s. Reflecting an increased level of prosperity in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Character Ranch houses had features evocative of other times and cultures, similar to the earlier Period Revival styles. Old West imagery in the form of board-and-batten, wood railing, and decorations such as wagon wheels, was a common reference for Character Ranches. The house is in an excellent state of repair and retains a high level of integrity.



Figure 1. The Ponderosa II in 2016.

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### Narrative Description

The single-family home known as the Ponderosa II is a sprawling Ranch Style house in the Golden Hills neighborhood located in east Mesa, Arizona (Figure 2). Golden Hills was initially called the Apache Country Club Estates (ACCE) and was a housing development marketed towards active-living adults. The neighborhood's plan centered around a winding golf course where the circulation pattern maximized the number of building lots abutting the course. The Ponderosa II was constructed in 1962-63, one of the earliest in the neighborhood, and is located on a prominent half-acre lot at the end of a cul-de-sac of Edgewater Drive (Figure 3).

The statement of significance in Section 8 presents the case that the Ponderosa II is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the areas of significance of Community Planning and Development and Architecture. The Ponderosa II was constructed as the flagship house to market the ACCE, its whimsical design intended to draw curious visitors to the then far edge of development in Mesa and the Phoenix metropolitan area. The house was constructed for actor Lorne Greene, star of the popular television series *Bonanza*. The house closely reproduced the image of the studio set of the show's fictional ranch house, the Ponderosa, in both exterior and interior. Greene was an investor in and the public face for the ACCE. Research by the current owners indicates Greene and his wife, Nancy, occupied the house as a weekend getaway and



Figure 2. Map of Phoenix metropolitan area showing the location of the Ponderosa II. Source: Google, 2016.

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possibly seasonally from 1963 into the mid- to late-1960s. During the property's period of significance (1963), the Greene's opened their home to visitors and potential home buyers as part of the ACCE's marketing.

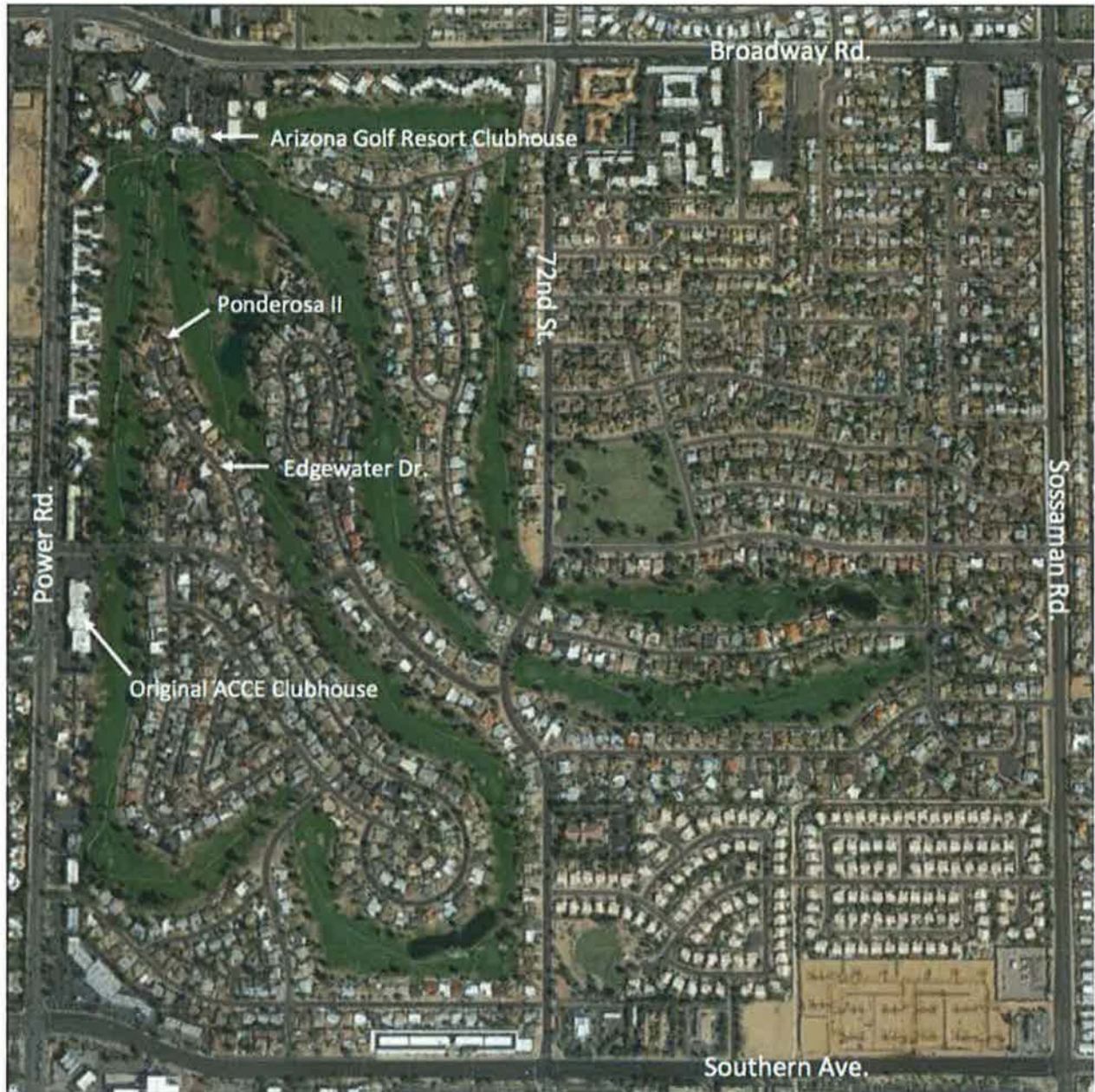


Figure 3. Aerial view of Golden Hills neighborhood, formerly Apache Country Club Estates, illustrating the design of the subdivision around a golf course and the prominent placement of the Ponderosa II. Source: Google, 2017.

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This section focuses on the design of the house and its place in the neighborhood environment. The sprawling form of the house across a half-acre lot and its interior division of space typify the Ranch Style housing product common for residential development in Phoenix, and much of the country as well. The Ranch Style that emerged in the 1940s was a relatively simple design, a reflection of Post-World War II austerity and common-denominator insurance standards set by the Federal Housing Administration. During the prosperity of the later 1950s and early 1960s, housing developers offered ever more elaborate versions of the Ranch Style, some emphasizing a sprawling one-story design across a large lot, others reintroducing ornamental features intended to convey an image of another time or culture. Popular between approximately 1955 and 1965, the Character (or Styled) Ranch marked a return to romantic associations and imagery that had waned since the decline of the Period Revival era during the Great Depression.

## SETTING

The Ponderosa II is located in Mesa, the third largest city in Arizona, which is in the eastern portion of the Phoenix metropolitan area. Now fully urbanized, at the time of the Ponderosa II's construction, the area was occupied by irrigated cotton farms and the Apache Country Club Estates was one of the eastern-most residential developments in the Phoenix area. The largest node of contemporary development in the area was Williams Air Force Base (now Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport), located five miles south.

The ACCE was a planned, active-living adult community, modeled after Del Webb's Sun City, which had opened to great success in 1960. As Webb had taken advantage of affordable agricultural land in the far west side of the Phoenix area, near Luke Air Force Base, the developers of the ACCE sought marketing advantage by joining a parallel trend towards active adult living (a marketing term preferred to "retirement community") in the far east region. The ACCE followed the established model of housing surrounding a golf course.

The Ponderosa II is located at the north end of the South Edgewater Drive cul-de-sac. As an investor, Lorne Greene reserved for himself the largest lot in the development (0.49 acres) with approximately 325 feet of golf course frontage. The golf course is on the north, east and west sides of the house (its rear), while the front faces southward towards other houses on the cul-de-sac (Figure 4).

## CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the Ponderosa II began in 1962 and was completed in 1963. The structure of the house is wood frame on a poured concrete slab, a standard method for Ranch Style housing product at the time. The house's 3,766 square feet of living space is the largest in the neighborhood. Its form has a square floor plan with an east wing for bedrooms and a southwest wing, which serves as a garage (Figure 5).



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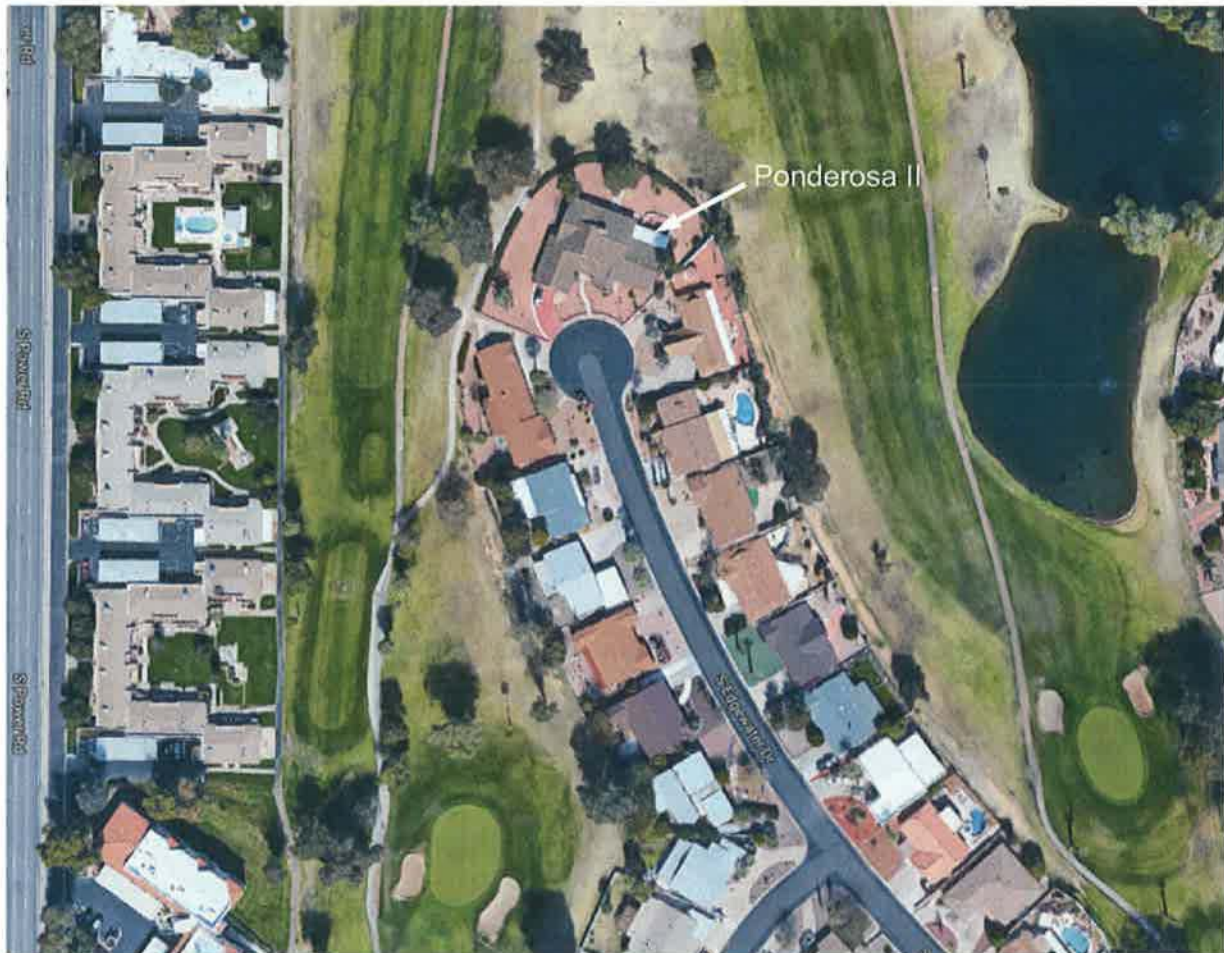


Figure 4. Aerial view of the Ponderosa II at the north end of the Edgewater Drive cul-de-sac (top) with south-facing street view of neighboring homes (bottom). Source: Google, 2013.

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The front façade faces southwest. The main entry is recessed into the center of the central square of the main body of the house. The exterior façade of the central square of the house is constructed of peeled logs with gray mortar “chinking” between. Both wings are constructed of horizontal wood siding. Rear, north side walls facing the golf course are of board-and-batten.

The main body of the house features a front-facing gable with a window offset to the left to create the impression of a second story. The garage wing also features a front-facing gable, while the bedroom wing has a side gable facing east-southeast. The roof sheathing is shake cedar, which complements to overall rusticity of the building’s design. The roofs over the wings extend outward to provide a wide covered porch with peeled log posts. A shed porch roof extends from the front façade below the main gable.

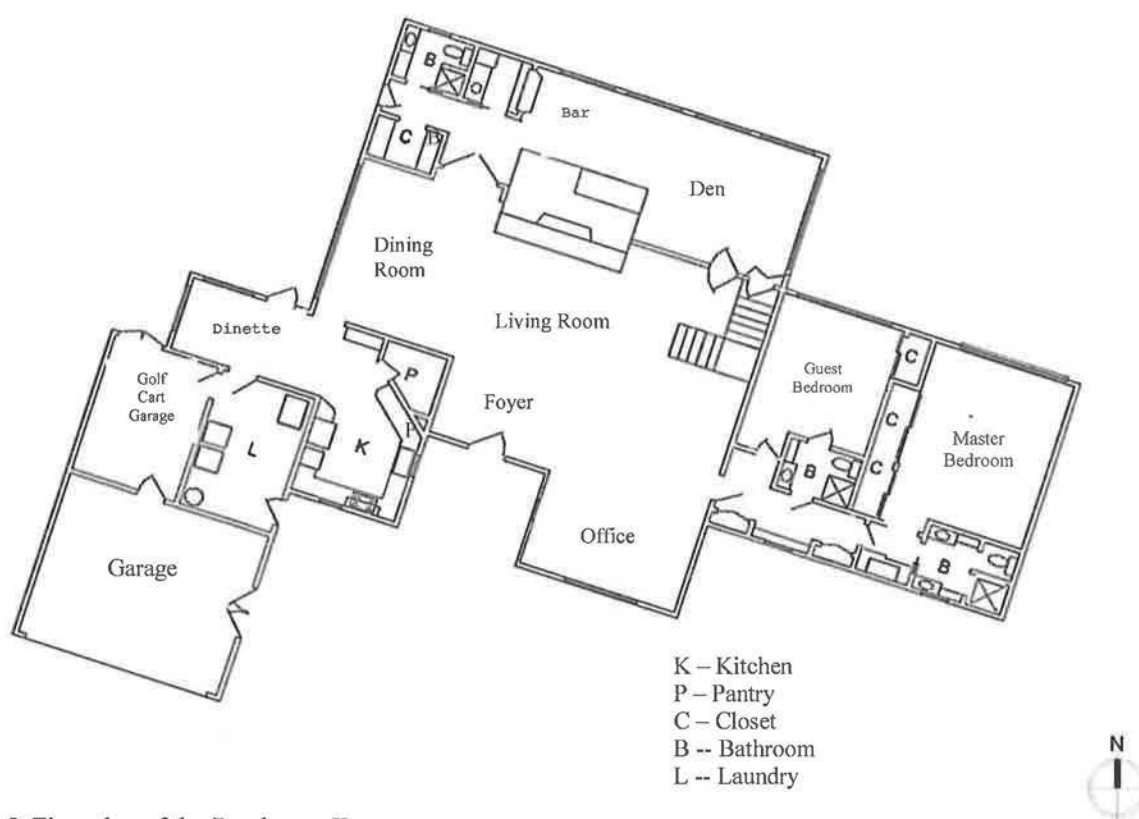


Figure 5. Floorplan of the Ponderosa II.

### DESIGN INSPIRATION

The design of the Ponderosa II was based on the image of the fictional Ponderosa ranch house from *Bonanza* (Figure 6). The setting for the popular television series was the high, forested country adjacent to Lake Tahoe in Nevada during the 1860s. Because the show’s fictional family, the Cartwrights, were prosperous, their house was large and well built. In the show’s background storyline, the character of the eldest son, Adam Cartwright, was an architect who designed it. The Ponderosa set was designed in what is referred to as Old Tahoe Style, a

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variation of the grand rusticity that was popular in mountain resorts and is related to the architectural trend that also produced National Park Service rustic style in the twentieth century. Old Tahoe Style is also referred to as “mountain” or “alpine” style. Its primary feature is a steep gable roof to shed snow and wood and stone to create a naturalistic exterior and warm, comforting interiors.



Figure 6. Studio set for *Bonanza* showing exterior façade that was the model for the Ponderosa II.

The house was constructed by Morris (Nick) Donato, a local Mesa builder, and another ACCE investor. The Ponderosa, of course, was nothing more than a studio set, which Donato adapted to the form of a real Ranch Style house. The two are close in appearance, though not precisely the same. The most noticeable difference is that the front gable of the Ponderosa II has a lower slope than its model. The Ponderosa II does not have a second story although it gives that appearance. In the process of creating a real house, Donato adapted parts of the studio set to practical use. For example, the wing to the left of the main body of the Ponderosa had no apparent function, but became the garage and utility room for the Ponderosa II.

## INTERIOR

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The floor plan of the Ponderosa II illustrates the interior organization of space. The primary spaces are the foyer, living room, dining room, and office. These are the spaces designed to reproduce the appearance of *Bonanza's* interior sets (Figure 7). The remainder of the house, including the rear bar and den, the east bedroom wing, and the kitchen, dinette, and garage wing were of contemporary character from the time of its construction. All of the original cabinetry, light fixtures hardware, wrought iron, pocket doors, and fire detectors remain.

Lynn Valentine was in charge of the Ponderosa II's interior design (Figure 8). Valentine, a Mesa High School graduate, studied at the New England School of Art in Boston and the New York School of Interior Design. He was well respected in Mesa and had a long successful career. He was particularly interested in interior designs that incorporated antiques, which made him an appropriate designer for the Ponderosa II.



Figure 7. Undated photo of the interior set of the Ponderosa at Paramount that was provided to Lynn Valentine for reference.

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Figure 8. Lynn Valentine at work at the Ponderosa II (above) and examples of his interior design of the dining room and the living room.

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### ADDITIONAL STRUCTURES

To enhance the setting around the house, the Greens included three “Old West” decorative features. A horse trough with pump was placed just west of the house within street view (Figure 9). A faux well with a rustic wood cover and bucket pulley (Figure 10) are located in the backyard, visible to the golf course. These decorative structures remain in a good state of repair and contribute to the historic character of the house. Contemporary descriptions also mentioned a decorative hitching post, however, this object no longer remains.



Figure 9. Greene with wife Nancy at the horse trough pump, circa 1963 (left). Trough with pump as it appeared in 2016 (right).



Figure 10. Greene at the well, circa 1963 (left). The well as it appeared in 2016 (right).

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### ALTERATIONS AND RESTORATION FOLLOWING THE GREENE'S RESIDENCE

The Greene's sold the Ponderosa II in the later 1960s to Harold Casteel, retired owner of Casteel Lumber Mills in Willits and Ukiah, California. Casteel and his wife became avid golfers and world travelers and had a home in Incline Village, Nevada, as did Greene. Casteel played a piano and kept one in the area now known as "Ben's Office," a reference to Greene's character Ben Cartwright. The house gradually lost its *Bonanza* character, especially during a remodeling project in the 1970s. The Spanish tile and rustic wood plank floor in the house was covered with carpeting. The wooden plank interior walls of the living room faded into the background under a coating of white paint. The window treatments were replaced and the dining room shutters came down as the west side dining room window was enlarged and hung with drapery. The brick pattern linoleum flooring in the kitchen was replaced with a yellow and gold sunburst pattern while the kitchen cabinets were painted a bright yellow. Doors were removed to create open corridors and walkways. The exterior was adorned with white trimmed windows and a white rail fence and hedges replaced yuccas in the front yard. Though it remained a beautiful home, the 1970s update degraded much of its former character. Casteel passed away while living at the Ponderosa II and the house stood empty until purchased by Louise and Tom Swann in 2011.

Though Casteel had made several alterations to the house, he had not done permanent damage. The missing doors, window hardware, light fixtures and dining room shutters had been stored in the attic, garage, or with neighbors who were pleased to return them back to the house. The Swanns used these materials to restore the house to its appearance during the Greene's residence. The restoration was guided by the photo and print archives from the estate of Lynn Valentine, the home's original interior decorator, which were graciously donated to the Ponderosa II by the Valentine family. Based on historic Valentine photos as well as images of the original studio set, the rooms have been restored closely to their original appearance during the 1960s when *Bonanza* was the number one television show in America. The exterior of the house was repainted to match the character and hue of the original timber. Because much of the restoration involved putting back materials that had been taken down but not discarded, the Ponderosa II today retains a high degree of design and material integrity (Figure 11).



Figure 11. The Ponderosa II, circa 1963 (left) and 2018 (right).

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On May 5, 2014, the Mesa City Council placed the Ponderosa II on the City of Mesa Historic Landmark Register (see Figures 12 and 13).

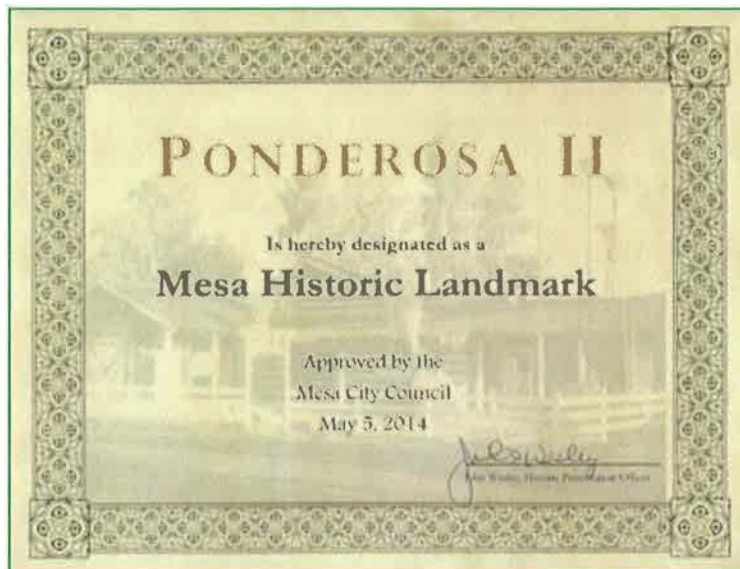


Figure 12. City of Mesa Historic Landmark Certificate

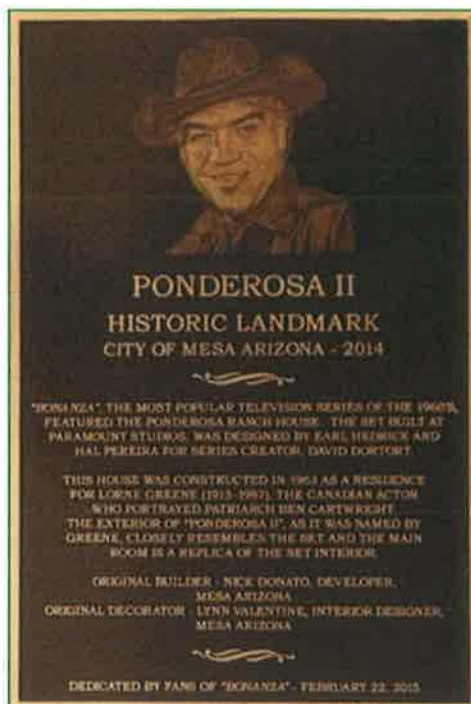


Figure 13. 12" x 18" Plaque placed at fence in front of property



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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development  
Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1963  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1963  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Nick Donato (Builder)  
Lynn Valentine (Interior Designer)

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## SECTION 8

### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Ponderosa II is recommended eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of significance of Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C for its architectural significance. The house was constructed in 1962-63 as the flagship home for the marketing of the Apache Country Club Estates (ACCE). The ACCE was an active-living adult community constructed north of Williams Air Force Base near the far eastern edge of the City of Mesa along what was then the edge of residential development in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The Ponderosa II was constructed for actor Lorne Greene as a replica of the ranch house depicted on the popular television show *Bonanza*. The Ponderosa II served as Greene's seasonal home when residing part-time in Mesa, where he became involved in community affairs. The Ponderosa II also served as a marketing tool for the ACCE, which prominently featured western theming in its selection of housing choices. Greene, an investor in the development company, served as the marketing spokesman for the ACCE. A survey of historic houses in Mesa identified the Ponderosa II as an excellent example of what architectural historian Virginia McAlester referred to as a "Styled Ranch Style" house, and is also referred to as Character Ranch Style. The Character Ranch was an elaboration of the functional Ranch Style house popular during the two-decade period after World War II when the style was at its peak. Character Ranch Houses included the Swiss Chalet, American Colonial, English Tudor, Polynesian Tiki, and American Cowboy Ranch. The Ponderosa II is recommended eligible at the local level of significance with a period of significance of 1963, the year the construction of the house was completed.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The description of the building's design characteristics in Section 7 is followed here, first, by a discussion of its architectural significance. This architectural character is then related to important themes in social history and community development. To begin, the Ponderosa II is significant in the area of architecture as the most notable example of the Character Ranch Style in the City of Mesa, Arizona. The context statement below provides a concise history of the Ranch Style as it developed from the work of California architect Cliff May to become the primary style of housing constructed in suburbs throughout the United States in the immediate post-World War II era. Initially a relatively plain architectural form, the Ranch Style house became increasingly larger and more decoratively elaborate as America prospered in the later 1950s and early 1960s. This culminated in the sprawling Ranch form, typically a one-story building on a large lot with a broad street frontage, a characteristic reflecting the automobile as the new primary means of transportation. In addition to offering larger houses, homebuilders in the later 1950s also began applying decoration to differentiate their product and give them more "character." This decoration typically drew from historical or exotic references, reminiscent of the old Period Revival Style of the pre-Great Depression era, and formed a sub-genre of the Ranch Style referred to as the Character or Styled Ranch.

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Following the discussion of the Ranch Style and the Character Ranch, Section 8 describes the property's association with the broad pattern of residential development in the Phoenix metropolitan area and Mesa specifically, with emphasis on a new form of community targeting older adults, both working and retired. The Ponderosa II was built to draw public attention and to make the Apache Country Club Estates stand out in a highly competitive housing market. The ACCE's developers were not alone in using a whimsical or awe-inspiring structure as an advertising tool, but the Ponderosa II is a rare surviving example of such a marketing device. As a new neighborhood, distant from even Mesa's historic downtown, the ACCE needed something outstanding, a gimmick perhaps, which would entice potential buyers to investigate. Construction of a house in the image of one of television's then-iconic homes, and the chance to meet actor Lorne Greene served that purpose well. The Ponderosa II resonated with the public because the Old West of the imagination had been a mainstay of popular culture throughout the twentieth century and, around 1960, was in the golden era of its television phase. The Ponderosa II tells a story of how popular cowboy culture could be made to serve the purposes of selling real estate, just as it was used to sell a wide variety of other products.

#### The Ranch Style and the Character (or Styled) Ranch

Prior to the Great Depression, the American housing market—at the risk of oversimplification—was divided into three parts. The market's high end featured homes designed by architects or custom homebuilders catering to clients able to afford individualized residences. At the opposite side of the market, the poor made due with older housing, multi-family accommodations, or for the very poor, ramshackle shacks in slums. For the broadly defined middle class, commercial housing producers developed housing products that were as modest or elaborate as the buyer's budget allowed. Commercial housing builders developed methods to make home construction less costly. Innovative builders like Harry Culver in southern California organized vertically integrated housing development firms, which handled multiple phases of real estate development from land acquisition, subdivision, sales and construction. After World War II, such methods spread throughout the country and were exemplified by builders like William Levitt, who's Levittown in New York became the model of the postwar suburb.

The Ranch Style house and master planned communities such as the ACCE reflected innovations in the housing market promoted by the federal government through agencies like the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Housing construction had been severely curtailed by the Great Depression and restrictions on building materials during World War II. To revive the market, the FHA provided mortgage insurance and liberalized terms of debt to encourage homeownership. The FHA also intervened to expand the market by regulating other aspects of the housing market affecting land subdivision, transportation infrastructure, and guidelines for style. As an insurer, the FHA supported stability in real estate values. In the late 1930s and immediately after the war, when the priority was on reviving a moribund housing industry, the FHA discouraged elaborate decoration of the kind sometimes found in older, Period Revival neighborhoods, as well as experimentations with Modernism. The result was the simplified Minimal Traditional Style, which provided affordable housing, especially to young and first-time homebuyers.

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At the close of the Korean War in 1953, the federal government ended the last of its wartime restrictions on the supply of building materials and the housing market could cater to the demands of an increasingly prosperous middle class. To support the expansion of the housing market, the FHA widened the availability of its mortgage insurance to higher cost housing and allowed increasingly elaborate decoration. By this time, the Ranch Style had emerged as the most popular housing product, especially for housing constructed on the integrated model of large-scale subdivision developers. The flexible form of the ranch house could carry a wide variety of exterior decorative forms. From the mid-1950s into the early 1960s, homebuyers again began to look for charm, romance, or other emotive associations with their homes. Increasingly elaborate decoration drew from history and other cultures, resulting in what architectural historians now characterize as Character Ranch Style. Although not referred to as period revival, ranch houses of this era displayed historic styles evoking, for example, the Old West, the Old World, or Polynesia.

During the Period Revival era, architectural stylistic development thrived in California. The Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival were largely the products of California architects whose influence quickly spread across the American Southwest. A smaller movement, the Rancho Revival, also flourished briefly in California, based on the adobe and wood-craft architecture associated with the historic era of the 1830s and 1840s when Hispanic building traditions were modified by the carpenters from New England who settled there prior to American acquisition.

The transformation of Rancho Revival into the California Ranch is generally credited to Cliff May (1909-1989). May simplified the rancho, opening up its enclosed courtyards and modernizing it for construction with contemporary materials like frame, brick, and block rather than adobe. When commercial tract housing began in earnest after 1945, the California Ranch house became the ubiquitous form for single-family residences from relatively small buildings aimed at the median-income homebuyer to sprawling custom forms. The California Ranch lost most of the Spanish/Mexican styling of its progenitors as most tract housing typically omitted the clay tile roof and stucco exterior walls. By the mid-fifties, however, prosperity allowed American homebuyers to indulge again in domestic decoration and the Ranch Style (losing its California moniker as its popularity spread across the country) became a blank canvas on which architects could apply decoration and elaboration. Two-story, split-level versions expanded the architectural palette from the initial one-story model and historicist decorations such as Swiss chalet details hid all previous connection to a Hispanic past. Hispanicization would return, however, in the sixties in the form of the faddishly popular slump block, a form of concrete block resembling an adobe brick, and arches. By late in the twentieth century, after Ranch Style's popularity had run its course, builders in the Southwest would turn to stucco-on-frame tract housing, again with tile roofs and arches. Italian influences would also reemerge in the so-called Tuscan variation of Spanish Colonial Revival-like tract homes of the early twenty-first century (McAllister 2013, 602-603).

The most popular of the decorated variations of the Ranch style in the fifties and sixties referenced not Spanish motifs, but rather those of the American Old West. American culture in the 1920s linked the rancho with the ranch of American western tradition. The cowboy emerged from mere frontier range worker to an iconic representative of American ideals. The high place

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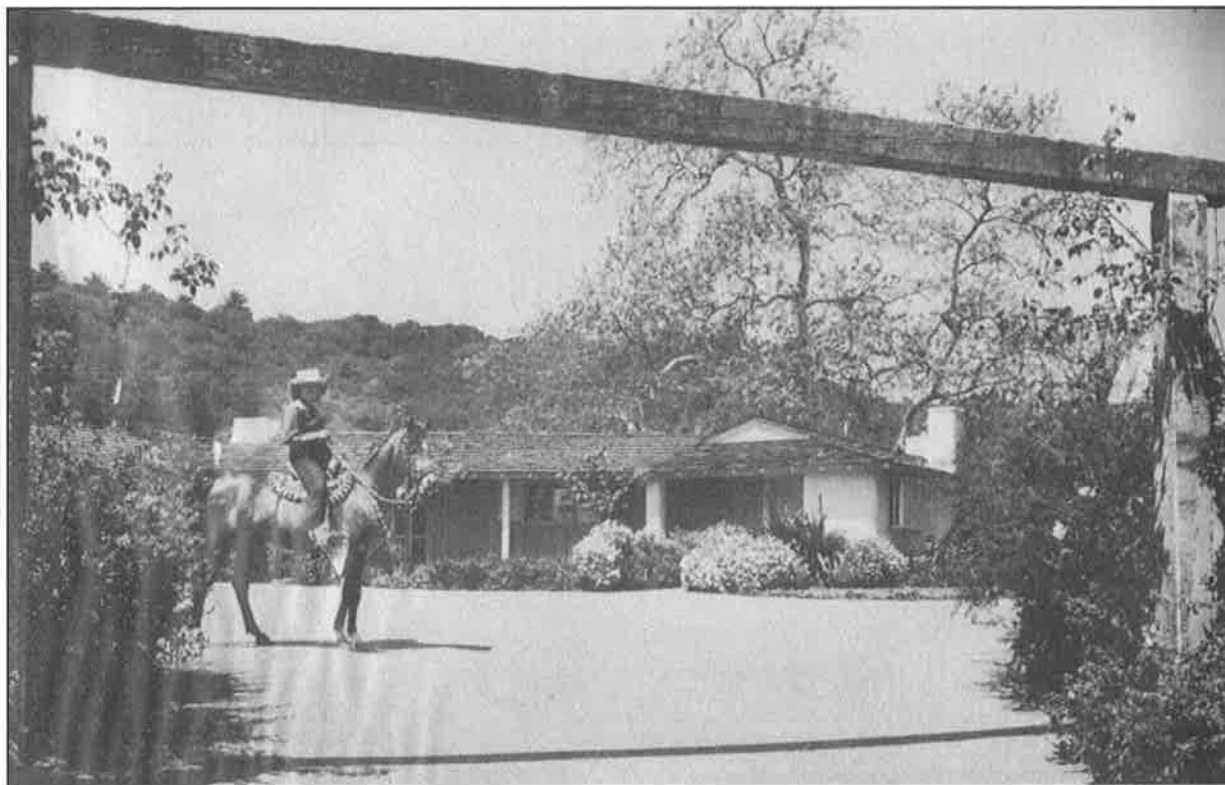


Figure 14. The California Ranch House marketed for its romantic connection to Old West imagery. From *Sunset Western Ranch Houses*, by the Editorial Staff of Sunset Magazine in collaboration with Cliff May, (San Francisco, California: Lane Publishing Company, 1946), 148.

of the cowboy in popular culture was in no small part due to Hollywood Western movies. Cowboy actors like William S. Hart and Harry Carey built ranch style homes employing elements of high style Spanish Colonial Revival with rustic variations on the rancho and American ranch. The blending of Spanish Colonial Revival motifs with decorative and cultural connections evocative of America's popular cowboy culture resulted in an amalgam that we may refer to as Southwestern Romanticism, its primary form, the California Ranch House. Two of its important visual features are the use of board-and-batten and shake roofs. In the hands of a master architect like Cliff May, the low-lying form of the ranch house suited a new vogue of indoor-outdoor living in romantic elegance (Figure 14). To the merchant builder, the California Ranch House served as a model for countless residential subdivisions across the Southwest built in the three decades following World War II (McMillian 188-194).

The Ranch house was a modern building form designed primarily with the mass housing market in mind. In its simplest, Minimal Traditional form, it lacked virtually all decoration and was little more than a rectangular box suitable for meeting the immediate needs of the post-war housing crisis (1945-1953). In its Southwestern form it expanded in size, spreading across increasingly large lots. Such Ranch houses were said to "ramble" or "sprawl," especially for high-end, custom

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models. This coincided with ideals of fifties-era domesticity—a new form for the single-family house where electric appliances replaced accommodations for servants. This became idealized in the marketing of so-called “indoor-outdoor living,” a mode of domesticity especially suitable to the American Southwest where with the aid of a backyard pool and barbecue, family life was supposed to be lived taking full advantage of the mild, sunny climate. Extensive window glazing and sliding glass doors enhanced this indoor-outdoor connectivity.

The characteristic features of the Ranch house include (*Sunset Western Ranch Houses* 1946, ix, 32, 34, 38-39, 42, 45, 48-49, 60-61):

- Single story, with a low to the ground profile. Increasing land cost would eventually rein in the Ranch’s sprawling character and two-story, split-level variations signaled the style’s eventual demise.
- Asymmetrical floor plan. In its simplest commercial builders’ product, the rectangular floor plan would be modified with L- or U-shaped plans. In its sprawling, or rambling mode, these wings often extended at obtuse angles, helping to define backyard spaces.
- Open floor plans. To cut costs, builders increasingly omitted space taken for hallways and interior walls, opening up the primary living spaces, for example, by leaving dining area open to the kitchen. Combined with larger windows, the Ranch house could feel very open, although not to the extent that often appeared in contemporary modernist designs.
- Large windows. Improvements to air conditioning technology as well as affordable plate glass allowed for greater window space, although rarely of the full floor-to-ceiling height except where facing the back yard.
- Broad porches formed from overhanging eaves. These porches both shielded windows from sun exposure and provided transitional space between indoors and outdoors.
- Pitched roofs of hip, gable or cross-gable form. Particularly in custom models and where building codes allowed, shake roofs provided one of the most distinctive of decorative features suggestive of the Old West ranch.
- Carport/garages. The Ranch house fully accommodated the automobile. From an initial attached carport, the garage was soon enclosed as a space as distinctive and important as any other room in the house.
- Simplified decoration. In its Southwestern “cowboy” form, the Ranch house often included board-and-batten siding although often over only a portion of the façade. Non-operative shutters and porches with X-railing between posts enhanced the ranch imagery.

The Ponderosa II embodies all of these characteristics, apart from the last, as its exterior and especially its interior decoration are more elaborate than the typical Character Ranch.

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The history of single family residential development in Mesa has been documented in the survey and report, "Mesa Postwar Modern Single Family Subdivision Development, 1946-1973," sponsored by the City of Mesa and prepared by Liz Wilson and Debbie Abele in 2004. The ACCE represents a particularly important niche in Mesa's housing market, age-targeted communities developed for seniors at or near retirement.

Establishment of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934 marked the beginning of a sustained national policy promoting single-family home ownership as the primary means of housing the American people. Through its insurance and regulatory guidelines, the FHA encouraged liberalized mortgage terms making homeownership more affordable to a larger portion of the American people. The goal of creating a nation of homeowners was also boosted by programs under the Veterans Administration, which offered additional incentives for returning veterans, as did favorable income tax treatment. The success of these programs can be seen in the Phoenix metropolitan area by the rise in the rate of homeownership: 33 percent in 1940, 47 percent in 1950, 61 percent in 1960, and 67 percent by 1970. The FHA postwar regulations also had a notable impact on street layouts, lot sizes, and site plans of subdivisions. For example, FHA standards favored curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs that slowed traffic and minimized entries to the neighborhood, factors that created a safer play environment for children.

Mesa, Scottsdale, Tempe, Glendale, Peoria, and other cities surrounding the state's capital of Phoenix, are located in the lower Salt River Valley. Agriculture was the primary land use in the Salt River Valley prior to 1940 with an extensive system of irrigation infrastructure constructed to store and distribute water from the Salt River and its primary tributary, the Verde River. Over time, agricultural land use gave way to the spread of urban development and the various Valley communities grew together into a single metropolitan complex.

Two trends initiated during World War II affected the course of the Salt River Valley's development by bringing in industry and military bases. Although war industry was temporary, civic boosters used the precedent to encourage new industries to locate in the Phoenix area after the war, especially manufacturing in high tech sectors with such companies as Motorola, Sperry-Rand, and Honeywell. Also retained were two of its wartime air training facilities, Luke and Williams air force bases, on the west and east sides of the Valley, respectively. The Phoenix metropolitan area's population grew at a rapid pace. Phoenix's population grew from 65,414 to 439,170 between 1940 and 1960. The rate of growth in Mesa was even greater, rising from only 7,224 in 1940 to 33,772 in 1960 (VanderMeer 2010, 172-174).

Subdivisions of single-family houses were the primary model of residential development in the Phoenix metropolitan area. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the fully integrated land development firm, handling related phases of land acquisition, subdivision, design, construction, and sales, replaced the earlier model of relatively small firm builder-contractors serving on a client-by-client basis. Usually working outside existing city boundaries, builders like John Hall and Ralph Staggs purchased farm land and converted it into new neighborhoods, always featuring variations of, first, Minimal Traditional and, later, Ranch Style, houses. The subdivisions built by John F. Long, the era's most prolific developer, merged into what would become the Maryvale community, one of Phoenix's major sectors.



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As the residential housing market expanded, developers explored the economic viability of niche markets. There was, for example, a brief enthusiasm for highrise apartments and condominiums close to central Phoenix in the late fifties and early sixties. A more substantial market was found in the older segment of the population. The Youngtown development in the Valley's west side begun by Ben Schleifer and Clarence Suggs in 1954 was the first in the Valley, and allegedly the earliest in the nation, focusing on adults over age fifty. Youngtown's modest success inspired Del E. Webb, generally a commercial property developer, to expand the concept with Sun City, a large, amenity-filled community opened in 1960 that would become a model for retirement communities nationwide.

Between 1956 and 1965, Mesa experienced a boom in population and residential development. An average of almost fifteen new subdivision plats were recorded each year. The average yearly construction rate was almost 800 new single-family houses. Projects specifically targeting senior adults and retirees were a part of this development mix. Mesa builder Ross Farnsworth started the first in 1958. Farnsworth's Dreamland Villa, located four miles east of Mesa's boundary, grew slowly from an initial thirteen acres into, by 1971, more than 600 acres, 2,100 houses, and more than 4,000 people. Dreamland Villa was designed around a golf course, which would become a distinguishing feature of large retirement communities. Ralph Staggs, one of the Valley's top three builders, joined the market in 1960 with Casa del Sol, a planned community of two-and three-bedroom houses. The golf course as center of community planning would be followed by subsequent development in east Mesa, including the Apache Country Club Estates and Leisure World. These latter two developments from the early 1960s and early 1970s, respectively, were located north of Williams Air Force Base, on Power Road north of Southern Road, then the virtual edge of the urban area (VanderMeer 2010, 210-212).

The Phoenix area's most prolific homebuilder of the 1950s and 1960s, John F. Long, got his start in the real estate business in 1949 when he accepted an unsolicited offer for the home he was constructing for his family. It was a sellers' market during the housing shortage of the immediate postwar years, and marketing involved little more than opening a model home and running a newspaper advertisement. By the mid-1950s, the market was more competitive with dozens of builders vying for customers. Price and location were prime competitive factors, but so too, increasingly, were style and modern amenities for the home and neighborhood. While the most affordable housing tended to be constructed of concrete block, more expensive homes might include a mix of materials, such as brick veneer and board and batten wood siding to enhance the character of an otherwise typical Ranch Style house. Builders competed with amenities such as modern air conditioners and electric appliances. Some set aside land for neighborhood parks and by the late 1950s were designing neighborhoods around golf courses.

Strong competition meant that it was inadequate simply to open a model home and wait for customers to arrive. Seeking advantage through cooperation, several builders starting in 1956 held an annual "Parade of Homes" in which each constructed a model on a cul-de-sac street so that potential customers might visit each conveniently. Heavily advertised, these joint effort events attracted thousands of visitors. The opening of a new subdivision had to become an event

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if it was to gain notice and free food or prizes were common attractions. A celebrity made any opening a special event, as when James Garner, star of the television western "Maverick," greeted visitors to Imperial Homes' Del San Estates subdivision in 1960 (Figure 15).

Developer Bob Healy took gimmickry to an extreme in 1959 at his Dutch Village and Dutchtowne developments near Glendale, west of Phoenix. There he constructed a colorful 55-foot windmill to attract attention and even publicized a complementary message from the embassy of the Netherlands to promote the romantic imagery of his new neighborhood (Figure 16). Also in 1959, K. T. Palmer and Tom Darlington constructed a 35-foot high, 62-foot long sundial to draw attention to the new town of Carefree they were developing north of Phoenix. Perhaps the most notable structures in Arizona specially built to promote real estate developments were the world's highest water fountain at Fountain Hills northeast of Phoenix, and the relocated London Bridge at Lake Havasu City along the Colorado River. These were built by Robert McCulloch and his real estate planner C. V. Wood in 1970 and 1971, respectively.

The initial marketing of the Apache Country Club Estates in 1961-62 emphasized the golf course and the active-living adult lifestyle. Lorne Greene's participation in the project and his decision to construct his own home there gave the ACCE its own unique building, a celebrity, and a new image to market. When construction of the Ponderosa II began in 1962, the marketing scheme was reshaped around it and Greene, with special note of the western-themed models available at the ACCE.

When it opened in January 1963, the Ponderosa II attracted more attention for the ACCE than had previous efforts and helped to spur sales to fill out the new neighborhood. Lot sales at the ACCE may have suffered initially because of its distance from most of the Phoenix metro area. As with London Bridge at Lake Havasu City and the fountain at Fountain Hills, a specially-built structure like the Ponderosa II may have been particularly effective in enticing visitors to travel a long distance.



Figure 15. A celebrity appearance by actor James Garner brought attention to the Del San Estates development. Source: *The Arizona Republic*, 8 May 1960.

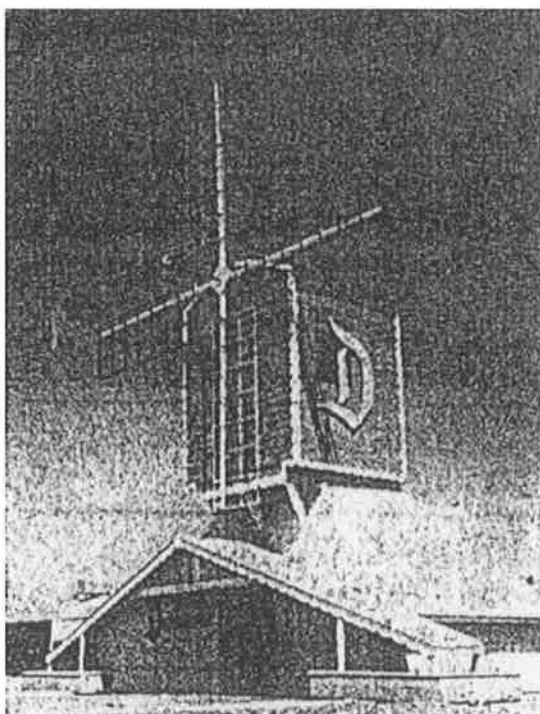


Figure 16. This windmill was constructed to publicize the Dutch-themed developments near Glendale. Source: *The Arizona Republic*, 20 September 1959.

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### Development of the Apache Country Club Estates

The Ponderosa II was a house built to showcase the lifestyle marketed by the developers of the Apache Country Club Estates (Figure 16). The first phase of planning in 1960 involved layout of the golf course, which encompassed 138 of the development's 390 total acres. Curving roads were designed to maximize the number of building lots around the winding golf course. The ACCE subdivision had 877 building lots, of which 37 were designated for multiple housing condominiums. Initial construction included a sales office (Figure 17) and seven model homes. By July 1961, 56 lots were reported to have been sold to individuals.

The golf course, club house, and pool were the focal points of the new community. Phoenix historian Philip VanderMeer has written on how golf course communities were popular during the 1950s through the 1970s in Phoenix and surrounding communities. A golf course was a marker of the higher end of the residential development market and many such communities were gated, although not the ACCE. Housing in new communities varied considerably according to the developer's target market. The initial phase of Sun City had emphasized relatively small, simple Ranch Style homes for seniors who no longer needed a larger family home. Leisure World, another adult community built just west of the ACCE in the 1970s offered an even more affordable neighborhood of manufactured housing. The ACCE marketed to adults forty and over who wanted comfortable and relatively stylish homes. The first homes built were in the range of \$18,000 to \$30,000. Advertisements indicated prices

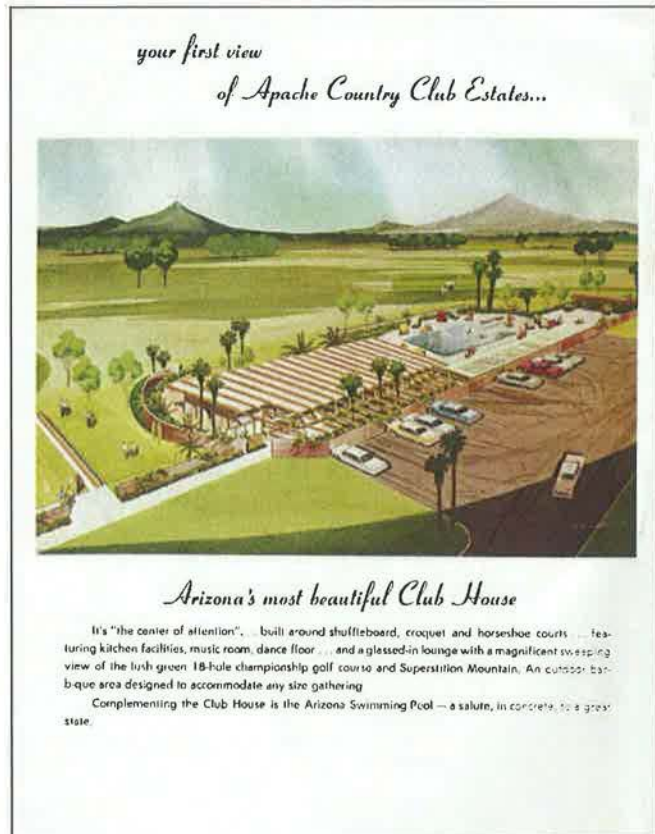


Figure 16. The Apache Country Club Estates marketed an active living lifestyle. Source: ACCE sales brochure, 1963.



Figure 17. This home at the southeast corner of Pueblo and Saranac avenues was the sales office for the ACCE. The distinctive roofline was a feature of the then popular Polynesian styling.

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ranging from about \$15,000 to \$27,000, depending on whether the model was two or three bedrooms, the choice of stylistic embellishments, and its location. To compare, the median price of a single-family home in 1963 was approximately \$18,000.

The difference between the lifestyle marketed at the ACCE from that offered by competing developers of communities like Sun City or, later, Leisure World reflected the participation of the most prominent of the ACCE's investors, Morris (Nick) Donato and Lorne Greene. Donato was a homebuilder in Mesa, a vice president and primary builder for the ACCE, and the builder of the Ponderosa II (Figure 18). It is not known if Greene was one of the ACCE's initial investors; he does not appear in the development's early advertisements. How Donato and Greene became associated is not known, but Donato had previously built in Spokane, Washington a replica of a house featured in the 1948 movie *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, starring Cary Grant and Myrna Loy. Donato later was builder of the Desert Sands Golf and Country Club in Mesa, which opened in 1969 to great success.



Figure 18. Ponderosa II builder Nick Donato (left), his wife Iris (center) and Lorne Greene (right).

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Greene, at the height of his popularity as the star of one of television's highest rated series, *Bonanza*, became not only an investor, but a resident of the new community. He could afford to build a replica of his fictional television ranch house and might have placed it anywhere in the West. He chose Mesa because of its admirably mild winter climate and because he could avail himself of work opportunities like filming television commercials at the nearby Apacheland Movie Ranch outside the *Bonanza* schedule.

The ACCE began to feature Greene in its advertising in 1962, which publicized the construction of the Ponderosa II as something for fans to come and see (Figure 19). Besides promoting "a new era of leisure living," these ads emphasized the romantic, Old West embellishments available in models with names such as the "Desert," the "Texan," the "Ranchero," and the "Adobe Hacienda" plans.



Figure 19. This 1962 ACCE advertisement emphasized Greene as a celebrity and as a resident of the new community.

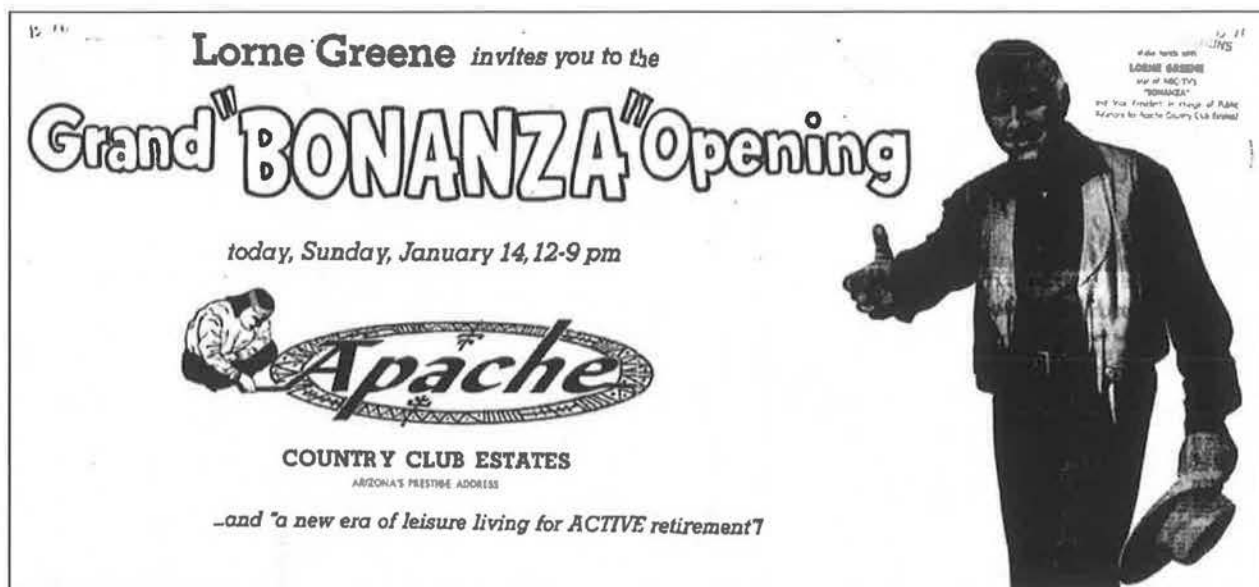


Figure 20. Advertisement from 1963 for the open house celebrating completion of the Ponderosa II.

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The climax of the ACCE marketing scheme was the open house held on January 14, 1963 to mark completion of the Ponderosa II (Figure 20). Visitors enjoyed the chance to walk through an accurate reproduction of television's Ponderosa and to meet "Ben Cartwright" in person. Doubtless many visitors also toured the ACCE's model homes, though research has not revealed how many home sites may have been purchased that day.

The Ponderosa II exemplifies the marketing of active living adult communities in Mesa during the 1960s. Visually, it is an architectural novelty and was the most elaborate of the Character Ranch houses constructed in the ACCE. Homebuyers could not purchase a "Ponderosa Model"



Figure 21. Two plans offered to home buyers in the Apache Country Club Estates. Using a similar form and layout, the houses could be customized with a variety of character features. Less ambitious than the Ponderosa II, the "Adobe Hacienda" plan (top) was a western-themed option while the "Mt. Vernon" plan (bottom) offered a touch of American colonial elegance. Source: ACCE sales brochure, 1963.

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for their own *Bonanza* house, but could purchase a model with an Old West flare, or a Polynesian or American Colonial look (Figure 21).

While the Ponderosa II was a novelty, it was a successful marketing tool connecting a popular theme in American culture to the home building industry. Construction and marketing of the Ponderosa II brought popular cowboy culture into the service of real estate boosterism by materializing the image of a popular television program's studio set as a real house in order to promote the sale of residential lots (Figure 22).



*welcome...*  
to "a new era of  
leisure living"  
from  
**LORNE GREENE**  
*star of*  
**NBC-TV'S "BONANZA"**

"Active retirement is not just a phrase — it's a new way of living. They say life begins at 40 — that's true if you're 40 years young. Many of us, after the children have grown up and established their own families, suddenly find a void. Here at Apache Country Club Estates you will find the only community of its kind in America — a community of mutual interests — but where you set your own pace — a community that offers you every facility for recreation and relaxation. It is my pleasure to present to you the Apache Country Club Estates story . . ."

Figure 22. Lorne Greene in western costume as spokesman for the Apache Country Club Estates. Source: ACCE sales brochure, 1963.

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Lorne Greene, *Bonanza*, and the Apache Country Club Estates

Lorne Greene began his career as the chief radio announcer for the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) radio from 1939 to 1942 and became known as the "Voice of Canada." Although his distinctive voice had propelled him into news casting, he had earlier shown an interest in acting during his education at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. After serving briefly in the military in 1945, Greene co-founded the Academy of Radio Arts in Canada as well as the Jupiter Theatre. In 1953, he moved to the United States to pursue an acting career, making numerous appearances on various telecasts before landing the role of Ben Cartwright on *Bonanza* in 1959. *Bonanza* was an American western television series that aired from September 12, 1959 to January 16, 1973. Lasting 14 seasons and 430 episodes it still continues to air in syndication. It centers on the Cartwright family, who lived on a fictional ranch known as the Ponderosa in the area around Lake Tahoe, Nevada. The show starred Lorne Greene, Pernell Roberts, Dan Blocker, and Michael Landon. *Bonanza* ranked #1 in the television ratings from 1964 to 1967 and was never out of the top five shows between 1961 and 1970. As NBC's first regular weekly color drama introduced in 1959, the show was instrumental in the growth of color



Figure 23. Lorne Greene, in suite and tie, was a special guest on the Luncheon in Mesa radio show. Local television cowboy entertainer Lew King is on the far right.



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television throughout the 1960s. After the series premiered in 1959, the set quickly became one of the most recognized “homes” in America. The familiar roofline and classic Old Tahoe Style architecture has graced thousands of photos and memorabilia items.

In 1969, Greene was appointed “Officer of the Order of Canada,” which is Canada’s highest civilian award, “for services to the Performing Arts and to the community.” Greene established ties to Mesa both before and after the building of the Ponderosa II. In the 1950s he appeared as a special guest on a popular radio show called “Luncheon in Mesa” (Mead, 1988) (Figure 23). He also appeared in employee motivational short films for Chevrolet, Bonanza’s sole sponsor, filmed at nearby Apacheland Movie Ranch (Sheffer, 2009) and at the General Motors Proving ground in east Mesa.



Figure 24. Lorne and Nancy Greene inside the Ponderosa II.

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Greene was involved in another ambitious Ponderosa project in Arizona. The Ponderosa Ranch House Caravan was a full-scale duplicate of the set at Paramount Pictures. A NBC Enterprises press release issued at the time states:

The lightweight traveling Ponderosa is complete in every detail right down to Ben Cartwright's Bible. While the original set weighs over 100,000 pounds, the portable Ranch House Caravan totals less than 12,000 pounds.

The hardware for the windows, doors and shutters plus the andirons for the great fireplace are all hand forged, full scale replicas of the originals on the "Bonanza" set at Paramount Studios, Hollywood.

It took more than three months to build a lightweight structure that would maintain the authentic appearance of the original "80-year-old" structure inside and out. The whole house fits neatly into two 40-foot trailers with furnishings fitting into a third, and can be erected or disassembled by six men in less than a day.

The Caravan was built by Walker Display Co., Phoenix, Arizona. It debuted at the Arizona State Fair in 1968.

Once *Bonanza* left network television in 1972, the Ponderosa gradually faded from the memories of those leading busy lives and raising young families. Western movies and TV fell out of favor as science fiction, sitcoms and crime dramas filled up the nation's airwaves. The Apache Country Club Estates Homeowners Association, Inc. dissolved and was replaced by the Golden Hills Homeowner's Association, Inc. in January 1984 (Slattery 1994).

### The Cowboy in Popular Culture and Its Influence on Arizona Architecture

After its completion, Lorne Greene held an open house at the Ponderosa II. Some 3,700 people came in a single weekend to see the popular television star and the image of *Bonanza's* patriarchal house materialized as a real home. The curiosity drawing such numbers reflected the popularity not merely of a television program but the phenomenon of the "Western" and the cowboy in popular American culture. Historian William W. Savage, Jr., suggested that the cowboy hero served two principal functions in American culture: as a transmitter of idealized social values and to sell merchandise (Savage 1979, 150). The Ponderosa II demonstrates the validity of this thesis as it was intended as a marketing tool for the Apache Country Club Estates, just as *Bonanza* itself was a marketing tool for RCA (parent company to the NBC television network) to sell color televisions. A brief synopsis of the cowboy in popular culture and its special relevance to Arizona reveals a greater depth of meaning in the Ponderosa II's architectural character.

The transformation of the cowboy from laborer on the range to heroic paragon of American virtues occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The entrepreneurial William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody created a Wild West show featuring trick riding, displays of marksmanship, and pageants that were morality tales of the triumphant march of American settlers across the continent. In 1884, Cody recast a former Texas cowhand, William Levi Taylor, into Buck Taylor, "King of the Cowboys." Taylor even became a fictional character in a

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series of dime novels, which, in addition to selling more tickets to Cody's show, established the cowboy as a central character and the West as a setting in literature (Savage 1979, 109-112). Starting with *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912), Zane Grey would perfect this first expression of the cowboy in popular culture in a long series of popular novels. Respected by few, but enjoyed by many, the western remains a popular literary genre.

The bandits portrayed in Edwin S. Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) introduced the cinematic cowboy to the American public, and though the movies portrayed at least as many villainous cowboys, it was the heroic cowboy, portrayed in the silent era by such stars as William S. Hart and Tom Mix, whom the ticket-buying public followed. From his breakthrough role in *Stagecoach* (1939) to his Academy Award-winning role in *True Grit* (1969), John Wayne would become Hollywood's leading western film actor at the box office. It mattered little that Wayne's *True Grit* character, Rooster Cogburn, was a U.S. marshal, or that Gary Cooper in *High Noon* (1952) also portrayed a marshal (as did various actors in the role of Wyatt Earp, to say nothing about the Lone Ranger). All were Hollywood cowboys who had dramatic (or comedic) situations to resolve, few of which involved cattle. The cowboy of popular culture had been separated from actual range workers from the beginning. Late nineteenth century historians from Frederick Jackson Turner to Theodore Roosevelt had seen in the conquest of the West the foundation of American character. Roosevelt, "that damned cowboy" in Mark Hanna's words, held up the cowboy as the embodiment of an aggressive, yet noble masculinity. The heroic cowboy of popular imagination was, in historian Savage's words, "stout of heart, strong of limb, quick of wit, and endowed with remarkable coordination of hand and eye" (Savage 1979, 96-97). The ticket-buying public, wishing to escape the realities of the Great Depression for at least the length of a double feature, supported a stream of B-level westerns, which the studios churned out in great quantity. For example, William Boyd portrayed Hopalong Cassidy through sixty-six films and fifty-two television programs from 1935 into the 1950s.

Hollywood and radio westerns were often aimed at children, boys especially, who could be expected to pressure parents to purchase products marketed by the program's sponsors. Sponsors included General Mills (*The Lone Ranger*) and Doublemint Gum (*Gene Autry's Melody Ranch*). Singing cowboys, such as Autry and Roy Rogers, were also popular during this era and likewise aimed for a juvenile audience. Every program had merchandise, like Hopalong Cassidy suits popular in the early 1950s, as well as comic books, games, and toys featuring their favorite cowboy character. Cowboy comics were a popular genre until replaced by superheroes (Savage 1979, 147).

Over the course of the 1950s, the western genre evolved away from a juvenile market in favor of new programs directed to adults who, after all, were the spenders of the family. The singing cowboys and B movies of film gave way to new programs, such as *Gunsmoke* (Chesterfield cigarettes), *Maverick* (Kaiser Aluminum), *Wagon Train* (Ford), and *The Rifleman* (Proctor and Gamble). *Bonanza*, which debuted in 1959, would run for fourteen seasons, second only to *Gunsmoke* as the most enduring television western. Most of these series featured elevated levels of violence compared to earlier Hollywood fare (apart from the cinematic deaths of countless Indians). *The High Chaparral* (1967-1971), a series revolving around a rancher living in the Arizona territory, which was filmed at the Old Tucson movie studio, was eventually dropped in part due to criticism of excessive violence ("The High Chaparral" 2016). The television western

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as a popular genre faded during the 1970s, replaced by the detective series set in a contemporary context. The cowboy as anti-hero became the new staple of the movies as in *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), and *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976). *Urban Cowboy* (1980) updated the western to a contemporary setting symbolized by high style western fashion, country music, and mechanical bull riding.

The influence of cowboy culture was particularly powerful in a state like Arizona, where tourism was an important industry. The dude ranch, a tourist facility in which guests could participate in more or less genuine ranching operations had flourished since the early 1900s. These remained an important economic player for some communities, such as Wickenburg, which advertised itself as the “Dude Ranch Capital of the World.” Arizona was also featured prominently in movie and television westerns, from scenic Monument Valley to the sets of Old Tucson. In 1960, an investor group opened the Apacheland Movie Ranch, located east of Mesa near the scenic Superstition Mountains (Figure 25). The studio was used throughout the sixties for filming episodes of television westerns such as “The Rifleman,” “Zane Grey Theater,” “Wanted: Dead or Alive,” “Death Valley Days,” and “Have Gun, Will Travel” (Apacheland Movie Ranch 2016).

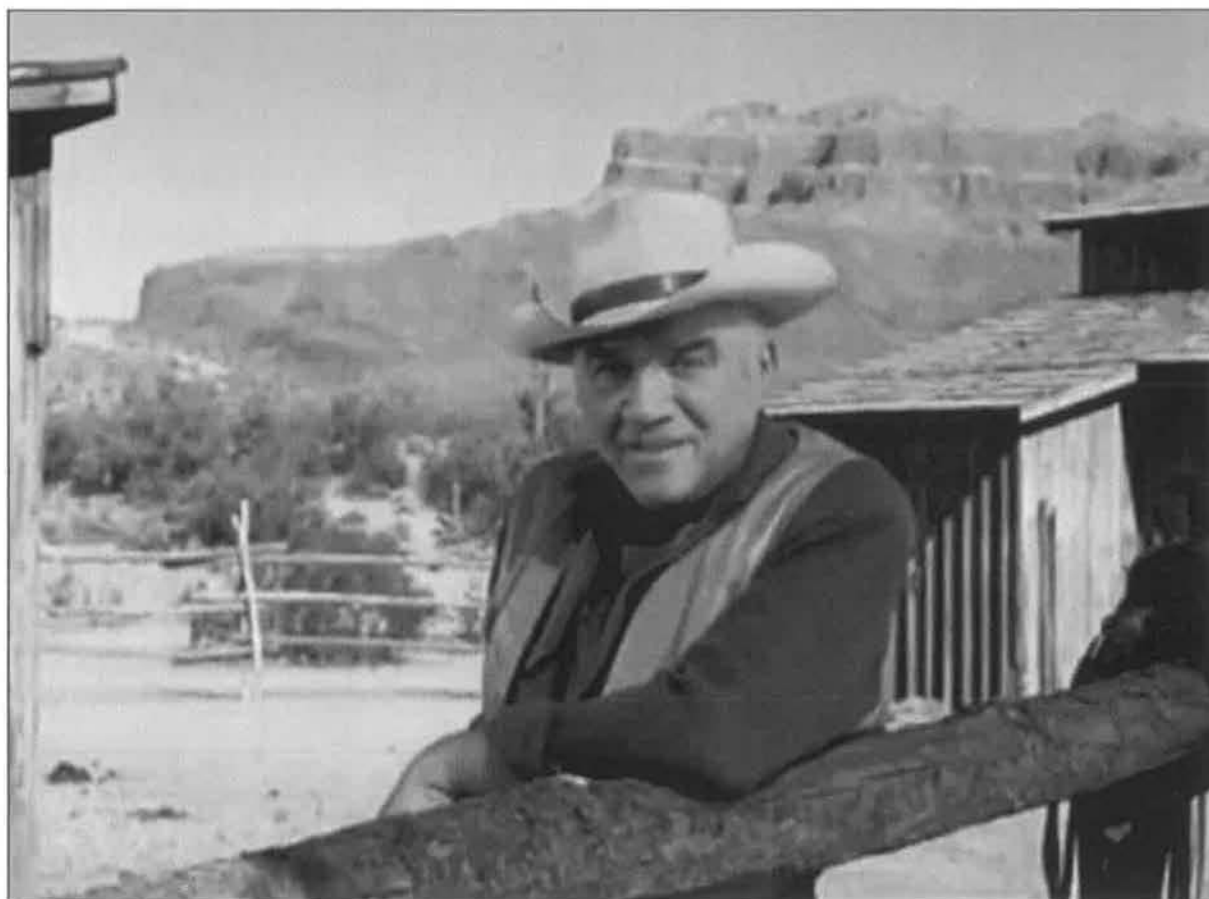


Figure 25. Lorne Greene in character as Ben Cartwright in a commercial for Chevrolet, filmed at Apacheland Movie Ranch, just east of Mesa, with the Superstition Mountains in the background.

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In the two decades following World War II, cowboy culture affected architecture and urban design in Arizona as tourism boosters sought to enhance the state's Old West image, even as other boosters were promoting its modernity to attract modern industry. Santa Fe, New Mexico and Santa Barbara, California served as models for this plan of urban design in that both of these cities had during the 1920s established legally binding construction guidelines intended to promote a romanticized Hispanic heritage. Santa Fe and Santa Barbara established variations of the Spanish Colonial Revival style as official community styles. At least two similar efforts were attempted in Arizona, only in both cases the movement was to promote frontier-style western architecture.

In September 1945, with the war only days over, a group of Phoenix boosters, including architects Charles Gilmore and Leslie Mahoney, participated in the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce's "frontier restoration committee." The group was formed as an expression of concern that "the priceless heritage of the old West" in local building was being lost. Lewis Hass, businessman and civic leader, asked the committee to compare Phoenix with cities like Santa Barbara and Santa Fe, which "reek with atmosphere, either real or spurious" and warned that Phoenix was on the verge of losing its marketable western image if an effort was not made to save some of the atmosphere and flavor of the West. Richard D. Searles, the committee's chair and a representative of Transcontinental and Western Airlines offered, "What we need here in Phoenix, in addition to sunshine and climate, is some atmosphere and avenues of entertainment in order to make it worth the tourist's while." While they understood that architecture should reflect the period in which people live, the committee's members were unanimous in their opinion that a modified Mexican-Southwestern style of architecture could be promoted without sacrificing modern comforts and conveniences. Burke Payne, a real estate developer, suggested that the city encourage Southwestern architecture, much as Santa Barbara and Santa Fe promoted their own distinctive styles. He also suggested development of an Indian or Mexican "village" as an entertainment and shopping venue. None of this came to pass. By 1945, Phoenix was simply too large and diverse to be guided by a single architectural vision (*The Arizona Republic*, 17 September 1945, 2).

Mid-century Scottsdale, located east of Phoenix, was relatively rural with a population of only about two thousand, but it possessed outsized ambitions to become an important city. McCormick Ranch, located north of town was a model modern ranch with a national reputation for its Angus cattle and Arabian horses. The Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce coined the motto "The West's Most Western Town" in 1947 and the city adopted it as its official slogan when it incorporated in 1951. Enthusiastic businessmen, playing to the tourist traffic, began nailing board-and-batten across existing buildings or building new in western theme. In one example, a group of businessmen and property owners on East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue between Scottsdale Road and Brown Avenue, hired architect Lester Laraway to design a retail complex in "dignified Western" theme—covered walks with unfinished posts, shake roofs, and rock or pine storefronts. In 1952, Scottsdale designed its new Winfield Scott School with western features like red brick walls, wide roof overhangs, natural finish hardwood doors, and a shake roof. In 1959, the city installed 200 genuine gas lamps in downtown and even a few private subdivisions installed gaslights as thematic decoration. Developer James Matthews even designed cabanas and recreation facilities

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at his Oasis trailer park in Western motif. In addition to mere building styling, several businesses played extravagantly on the Western theme, such as the restaurant and mini-theme park Rawhide, the Pinnacle Peak Patio, and the Pink Pony Steakhouse. Many of these businesses have closed in recent years. Still, the city hosts a major rodeo, operates an equestrian center at West World, and recently opened the Scottsdale Museum of the West (*The Arizona Republic* 26 May 1952, 12; 12 September 1952, 16; 26 August 1956, 5:10; 20 December 1959, 5:20).

A character-defining feature of architecture illustrating the influence of Western themes in the 1950s and 1960s is the use of board and batten. Whether alone or combined with other materials like red brick or slump block, which imitates the look of adobe, board and batten evoked the image of the Old West. At its height in the 1950s, many owners of commercial buildings remodeled their exteriors using board and batten to create the image of an Old West streetscape, as in Gilbert's old downtown. Cowboy culture affected architectural design also through modest use of decorative features like pine or redwood trim, wagon wheels, decorative wood shutters, and cedar shake roofs applied to otherwise standard tract housing product in the 1950s. The sprawling Ranch Style house, especially custom-built homes, displayed western motifs to advantage. Where the western look most influenced architecture was in single-family residences in the Ranch Style, which became increasingly elaborate in decoration in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In this regard, the Ponderosa II was the most elaborate of Ranch Style homes of the era. It was a perfect symbol of its era, drawing not from any authentic architectural style from the nineteenth century West, but from the set of a television series.

## CONCLUSION

The Ponderosa II is a large Ranch Style house built in 1962-63. It is an outstanding example in Mesa of the Character Ranch, a large and decoratively elaborate version of the Ranch Style popular during the late 1950s and early 1960s. The house was constructed for actor Lorne Greene to resemble the Ponderosa ranch house set as depicted on the television series *Bonanza*, which was an American Old West television series airing from September 12, 1959 to January 16, 1973. In addition to serving as a home, the Ponderosa II provided a marketing tool and image for the Apache Country Club Estates development, an active-living adult community in east Mesa. The house's reference to the popular television western links it to the brief movement during the 1940s and into the 1960s when Old West architectural theming was an important part of community planning and development in Arizona, as in nearby Scottsdale and Gilbert. The Ponderosa II is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under both Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and Criterion C in the area of architecture. The house is significant at the local level. The period of significance is 1963, the year construction of the house was completed.

Ponderosa II  
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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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- Apacheland Movie Ranch. Website. <http://www.movielocationsplus.com/apache.htm>. Accessed April 8, 2016.
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- Christopher, Kevin (2014). *Mesa recognizes iconic church and Ponderosa replica as historic landmarks*, Mesa Historic Preservation Committee Press Release.
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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.49

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.403730

Longitude: -111.682850

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)



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The boundary of the nominated property is the approximately .49 acres enclosed by the Edgewater Drive cul-de-sac on the south, the boundary with the neighboring property on the southwest, the boundary with the neighboring property on the southeast, and an approximately 325 foot, arc shaped boundary with the Arizona Golf Resort on the northwest, north, and northeast sides of the property.



Figure 18. Satellite photo of the nominated property with the boundary of the property and the location of the well and trough shown in red.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the legal property line of the lot (Maricopa County parcel number 218-55-023 historically associated with the Ponderosa II since its construction.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Louise M. Swann and Thomas A. Swann (with editing by William Collins, SHPO)

organization: \_\_\_\_\_

street & number: 602 S. Edgewater Dr.

city or town: Mesa state: AZ zip code: 85208

e-mail: tswann@mesa-tech.org

telephone: (480) 278-5647

date: August 2017

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photo Log

Ponderosa II  
Name of Property

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Name of Property: Ponderosa II  
City or Vicinity: Mesa  
County: Maricopa State: Arizona  
Photographer: Thomas Swann

Date Photographed: April 8, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 14 . South façade, facing north
- 2 of 14 . South façade, facing north
- 3 of 14 . South façade, facing north
- 4 of 14 . South entrance, facing north
- 5 of 14 . South façade, facing west-northwest
- 6 of 14 . West façade, facing northeast
- 7 of 14 . West façade, facing east-southeast
- 8 of 14 . West façade, facing southeast
- 9 of 14 . North façade, facing southeast
- 10 of 14 . North façade, facing south
- 11 of 14 . North façade, facing southwest

Photographer: Eric Vondy

Date Photographed: January 8, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 12 of 14 . Interior. "Ben's Office." Facing south
- 13 of 14 . Interior. Stairway to attic, Great Room. Facing east-southeast
- 14 of 14 . Interior. Great Room and Fireplace. Facing northwest

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC

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### Photograph Guide



Sections 1-6 page 45

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**Photo 2 of 14**



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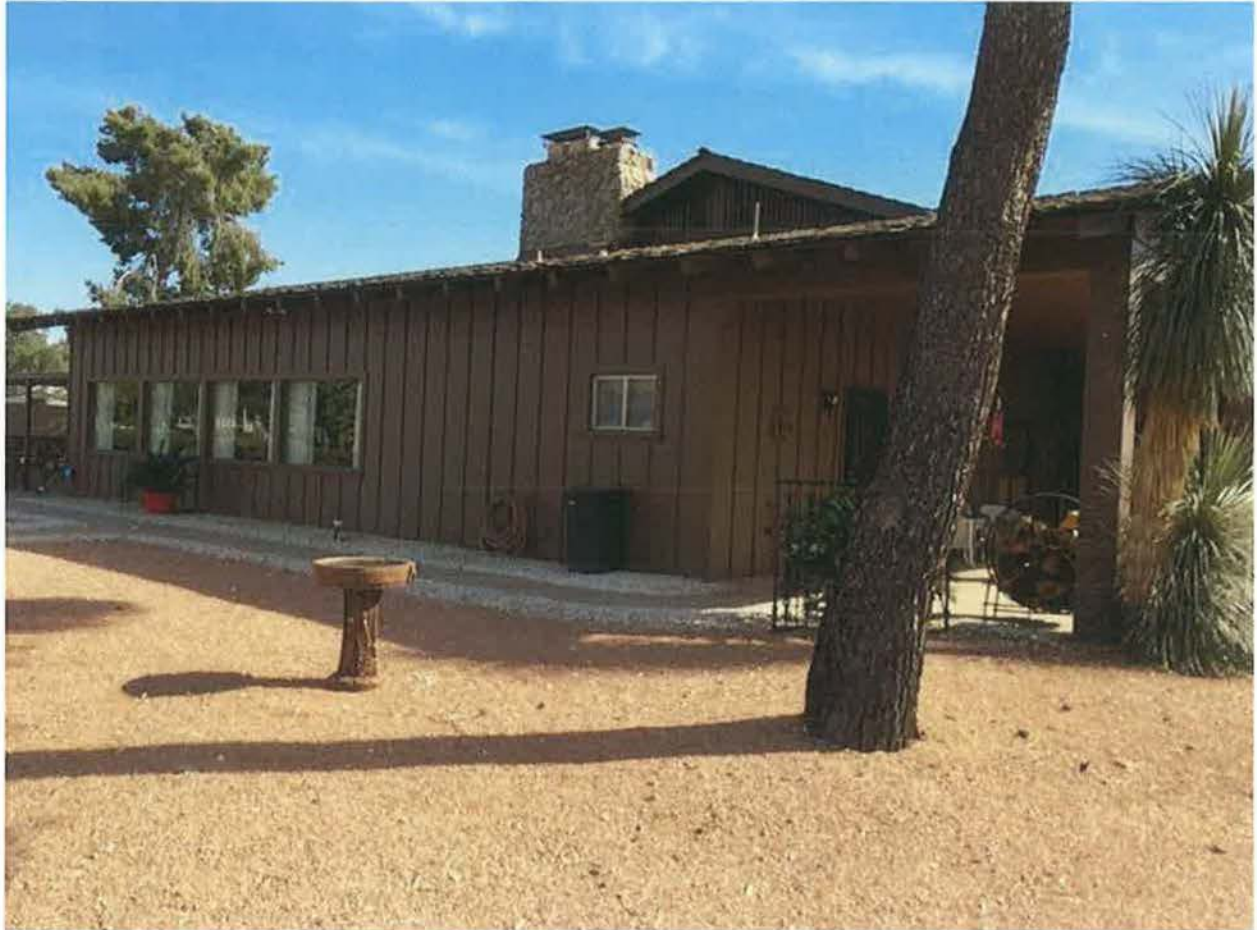
**Photo 8 of 14**



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**Photo 9 of 14**



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**Photo 10 of 14**



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National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.



# Evaluation/Return Sheet For Single/Multi Nomination

1 of 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Resubmission

Property Name: Ponderosa II

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: ARIZONA, Maricopa

Date Received: 5/10/2018    Date of Pending List: \_\_\_\_\_    Date of 16th Day: \_\_\_\_\_    Date of 45th Day: \_\_\_\_\_    Date of Weekly List: 6/25/2018

Reference number: RS100002146

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

Accept     Return     Reject    6/25/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation/ Criteria: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer Roger Reed    Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2278    Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

Back

**ARIZONA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO)  
NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION  
TRANSMITTAL FORM  
\*\*FEDERAL EXPRESS\*\***



**DATE:** January 11, 2018

**TO:**

**Edson Beall  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, D.C. 20240**

**FROM:**

**William Collins  
National Register Coordinator  
State Historic Preservation Office  
1100 West Washington Street  
Phoenix AZ 85007**

**National Register Nomination:**

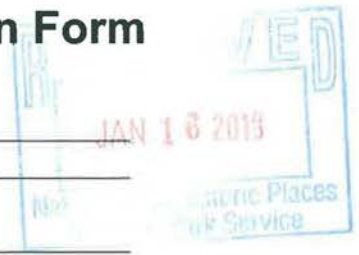
**Ponderosa II  
Mesa, Maricopa County, Arizona**

**Documentation for this National Register nomination is enclosed, as required.  
Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at  
wcollins@azstateparks.gov or 602.542.7159.**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

56-2146

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Ponderosa II

Other names/site number: Lorne Greene's Ponderosa; Ponderosa Replica

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

### 2. Location

Street & number: 602 S. Edgewater Drive

City or town: Mesa State: AZ County: Maricopa

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

Returned

<u>Katelyn Luce</u> AZ SHPO	<u>1/11/2018</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Arizona State Parks and Trails</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Returned

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>2</u>	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>3</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling=House  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling=House  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Ranch Style

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood/Cedar Shake/Stone (granite)

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Returned



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### Summary Paragraph

The Ponderosa II is a single-family residence in the City of Mesa, Arizona (Figure 1). The house was constructed in 1962-63 as part of the former Apache Country Club Estates subdivision, now referred to as Golden Hills, an active-living adult community developed during the 1960s. The house is located on a prominent lot adjacent to the community's golf course. It is one story and constructed of wood frame on concrete slab. Exterior elevations are different types of wood: half-split logs on the primary façade, board-and-batten on the rear facades, and horizontal wood siding on the garage and bedroom wings. Although one story in height, a decorative window in the front façade gable gives the appearance of a second floor. This is complemented on the interior with a stairway to a faux second story door. Primary interior features include two large stone fireplaces and a continuation of the rustic theme with a wood floor, and wood and log walls. The Ponderosa II is a Ranch Style house constructed as a seasonal residence for actor Lorne Greene, star of the popular television series *Bonanza*. It was designed to closely replicate the fictional Ponderosa ranch house, thus its name Ponderosa II. The house is an elaboration of the typical Ranch Style house plan, which is referred to in architectural history literature as a Character Ranch or a Styled Ranch. In this subcategory of Ranch Style, exterior decoration returned to what was once a simplified residential form from the 1940s and early 1950s. Reflecting an increased level of prosperity in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Character Ranch houses had features evocative of other times and cultures, similar to the earlier Period Revival styles. Old West imagery in the form of board-and-batten, wood railing, and decorations such as wagon wheels, was a common reference for Character Ranches. The house is in an excellent state of repair and retains a high level of integrity.



Figure 1. The Ponderosa II in 2016.

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### Narrative Description

The single-family home known as the Ponderosa II is a sprawling Ranch Style house in the Golden Hills neighborhood located in east Mesa, Arizona (Figure 2). Golden Hills was initially called the Apache Country Club Estates (ACCE) and was a housing development marketed towards active-living adults. The neighborhood’s plan centered around a winding golf course where the circulation pattern maximized the number of building lots abutting the course. The Ponderosa II was constructed in 1962-63, one of the earliest in the neighborhood, and is located on a prominent half-acre lot at the end of a cul-de-sac of Edgewater Drive (Figure 3).

The statement of significance in Section 8 presents the case that the Ponderosa II is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the area of significance of Community Planning and Development. The Ponderosa II was constructed as the flagship house to market the ACCE, its whimsical design intended to draw curious visitors to the then far edge of development in Mesa and the Phoenix metropolitan area. The house was constructed for actor Lorne Greene, star of the popular television series *Bonanza*. The house closely reproduced the image of the studio set of the show’s fictional ranch house, the Ponderosa, in both exterior and interior. Greene was an investor in and the public face for the ACCE. Research by the current owners indicates Greene and his wife, Nancy, occupied the house as a weekend getaway and possibly seasonally from



Figure 2. Map of Phoenix metropolitan area showing the location of the Ponderosa II. Source: Google, 2016.

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1963 into the mid- to late-1960s. During the property's period of significance (1963), the Greene's opened their home to visitors and potential home buyers as part of the ACCE's marketing.



Figure 3. Aerial view of Golden Hills neighborhood, formerly Apache Country Club Estates, illustrating the design of the subdivision around a golf course and the prominent placement of the Ponderosa II. Source: Google, 2017.

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This section focuses on the design of the house and its place in the neighborhood environment. The sprawling form of the house across a half-acre lot and its interior division of space typify the Ranch Style housing product common for residential development in Phoenix, and much of the country as well. The Ranch Style that emerged in the 1940s was a relatively simple design, a reflection of Post-World War II austerity and common-denominator insurance standards set by the Federal Housing Administration. During the prosperity of the later 1950s and early 1960s, housing developers offered ever more elaborate versions of the Ranch Style, some emphasizing a sprawling one-story design across a large lot, others reintroducing ornamental features intended to convey an image of another time or culture. Popular between approximately 1955 and 1965, the Character (or Styled) Ranch marked a return to romantic associations and imagery that had waned since the decline of the Period Revival era during the Great Depression.

## SETTING

The Ponderosa II is located in Mesa, the third largest city in Arizona, which is in the eastern portion of the Phoenix metropolitan area. Now fully urbanized, at the time of the Ponderosa II's construction, the area was occupied by irrigated cotton farms and the Apache Country Club Estates was one of the eastern-most residential developments in the Phoenix area. The largest node of contemporary development in the area was Williams Air Force Base (now Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport), located five miles south.

The ACCE was a planned, active-living adult community, modeled after Del Webb's Sun City, which had opened to great success in 1960. As Webb had taken advantage of affordable agricultural land in the far west side of the Phoenix area, near Luke Air Force Base, the developers of the ACCE sought marketing advantage by joining a parallel trend towards active adult living (a marketing term preferred to "retirement community") in the far east region. The ACCE followed the established model of housing surrounding a golf course.

The Ponderosa II is located at the north end of the South Edgewater Drive cul-de-sac. As an investor, Lorne Greene reserved for himself the largest lot in the development (0.49 acres) with approximately 325 feet of golf course frontage. The golf course is on the north, east and west sides of the house (its rear), while the front faces southward towards other houses on the cul-de-sac (Figure 4).

## CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the Ponderosa II began in 1962 and was completed in 1963. The structure of the house is wood frame on a poured concrete slab, a standard method for Ranch Style housing product at the time. The house's 3,766 square feet of living space is the largest in the neighborhood. Its form has a square floor plan with an east wing for bedrooms and a southwest wing, which serves as a garage (Figure 5).

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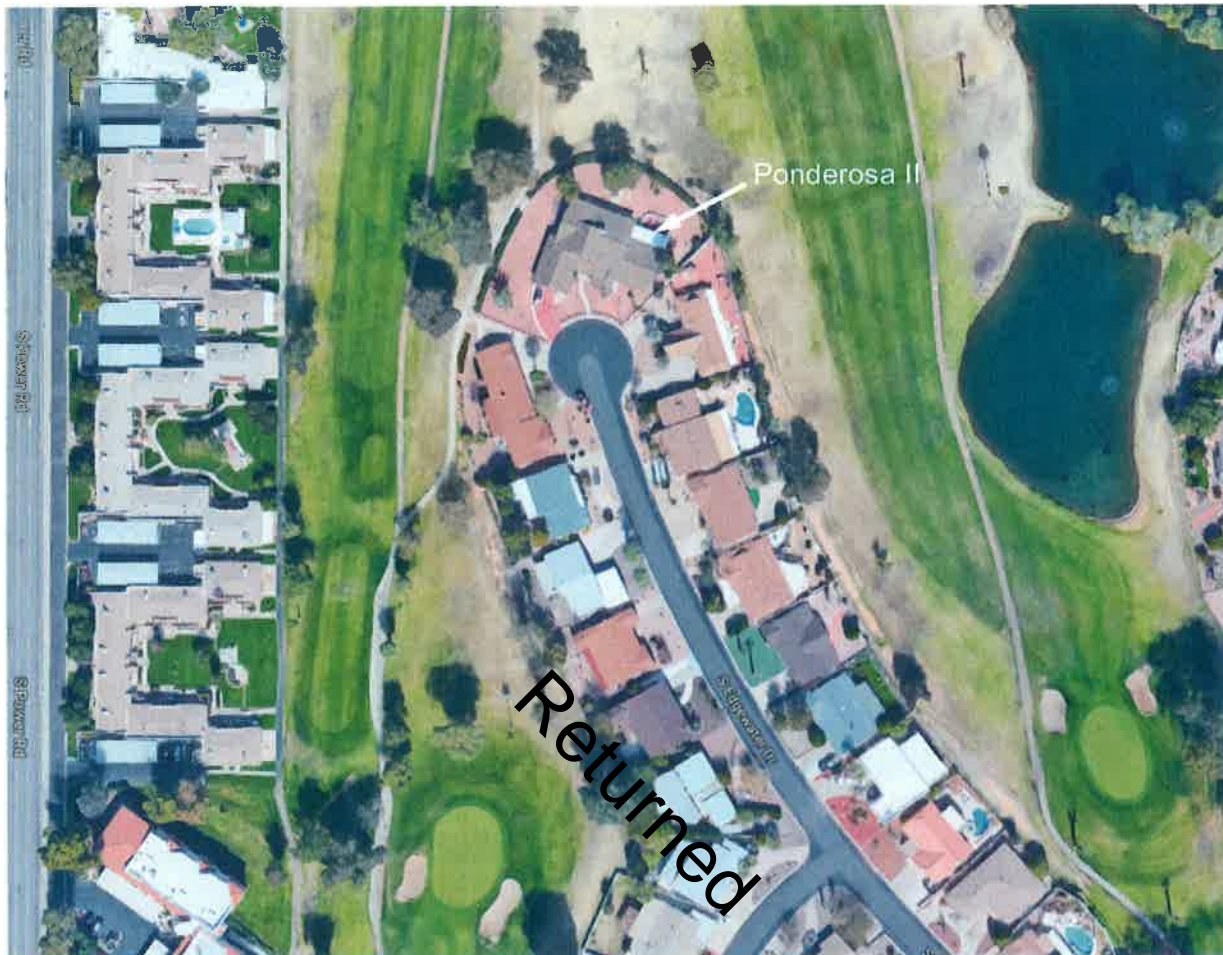


Figure 4. Aerial view of the Ponderosa II at the north end of the Edgewater Dr. cul-de-sac (top) with south-facing street view of neighboring homes (bottom). Source: Google, 2013.

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The front façade faces southwest. The main entry is recessed into the center of the central square of the main body of the house. The exterior façade of the central square of the house is constructed of peeled logs with gray mortar “chinking” between. Both wings are constructed of horizontal wood siding. Rear, north side walls facing the golf course are of board-and-batten.

The main body of the house features a front-facing gable with a window offset to the left to create the impression of a second story. The garage wing also features a front-facing gable, while the bedroom wing has a side gable facing east-southeast. The roof sheathing is shake cedar, which complements to overall rusticity of the building’s design. The roofs over the wings extend outward to provide a wide covered porch with peeled log posts. A shed porch roof extends from the front façade below the main gable.

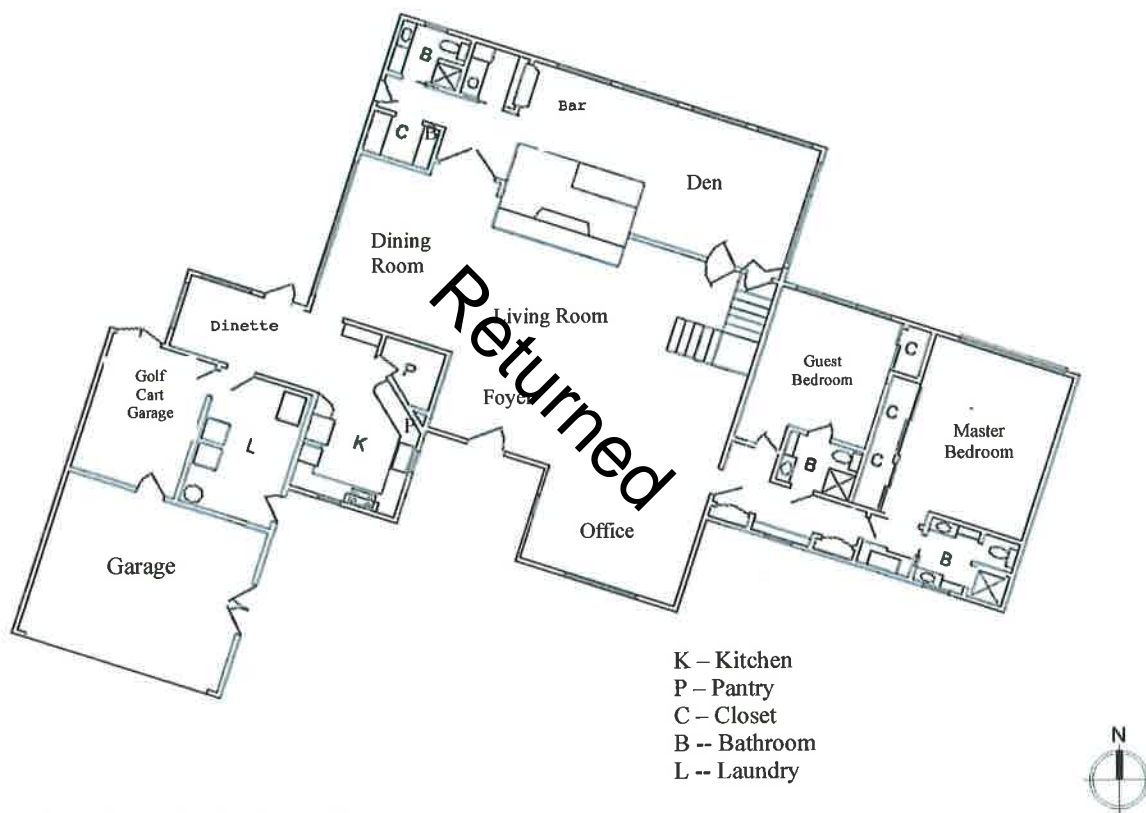


Figure 5. Floorplan of the Ponderosa II.

### DESIGN INSPIRATION

The design of the Ponderosa II was based on the image of the fictional Ponderosa ranch house from *Bonanza* (Figure 6). The setting for the popular television series was the high, forested country adjacent to Lake Tahoe in Nevada during the 1860s. Because the show’s fictional family, the Cartwrights, were prosperous, their house was large and well built. In the show’s background storyline, the character of the eldest son, Adam Cartwright, was an architect who designed it. The Ponderosa set was designed in what is referred to as Old Tahoe Style, a

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variation of the grand rusticity that was popular in mountain resorts and is related to the architectural trend that also produced National Park Service rustic style in the twentieth century. Old Tahoe Style is also referred to as “mountain” or “alpine” style. Its primary feature is a steep gable roof to shed snow and wood and stone to create a naturalistic exterior and warm, comforting interiors.



Figure 6. Studio set for *Bonanza* showing exterior façade that was the model for the Ponderosa II.

The house was constructed by Morris (Nick) Donato, a local Mesa builder, and another ACCE investor. The Ponderosa, of course, was nothing more than a studio set, which Donato adapted to the form of a real Ranch Style house. The two are close in appearance, though not precisely the same. The most noticeable difference is that the front gable of the Ponderosa II has a lower slope than its model. The Ponderosa II does not have a second story although it gives that appearance. In the process of creating a real house, Donato adapted parts of the studio set to practical use. For example, the wing to the left of the main body of the Ponderosa had no apparent function, but became the garage and utility room for the Ponderosa II.

## INTERIOR

The floor plan of the Ponderosa II illustrates the interior organization of space. The primary spaces are the foyer, living room, dining room, and office. These are the spaces designed to

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reproduce the appearance of *Bonanza*'s interior sets (Figure 7). The remainder of the house, including the rear bar and den, the east bedroom wing, and the kitchen, dinette, and garage wing were of contemporary character from the time of its construction. All of the original cabinetry, light fixtures hardware, wrought iron, pocket doors, and fire detectors remain.

Lynn Valentine was in charge of the Ponderosa II's interior design (Figure 8). Valentine, a Mesa High School graduate, studied at the New England School of Art in Boston and the New York School of Interior Design. He was well respected in Mesa and had a long successful career. He was particularly interested in interior designs that incorporated antiques, which made him an appropriate designer for the Ponderosa II.



Figure 7. Undated photo of the interior set of the Ponderosa at Paramount that was provided to Lynn Valentine for reference.



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Figure 8. Lynn Valentine at work at the Ponderosa II (above) and examples of his interior design of the dining room and the living room.

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### ADDITIONAL STRUCTURES

To enhance the setting around the house, the Greens included three “Old West” decorative features. A horse trough with pump was placed just west of the house within street view (Figure 9). A faux well with a rustic wood cover and bucket pulley (Figure 10) are located in the backyard, visible to the golf course. These decorative structures remain in a good state of repair and contribute to the historic character of the house. Contemporary descriptions also mentioned a decorative hitching post, however, this object no longer remains.



Figure 9. Greene with wife Nancy at the horse trough pump, circa 1963 (left). Trough with pump as it appears in 2016 (right).



Figure 10. Greene at the well, circa 1963 (left). The well as it appears in 2016 (right).

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### ALTERATIONS AND RESTORATION FOLLOWING THE GREENE’S RESIDENCE

The Greene’s sold the Ponderosa II in the later 1960s to Harold Casteel, retired owner of Casteel Lumber Mills in Willits and Ukiah, California. Casteel and his wife became avid golfers and world travelers and had a home in Incline Village, Nevada, as did Greene. Casteel played a piano and kept one in the area now known as “Ben’s Office,” a reference to Greene’s character Ben Cartwright. The house gradually lost its *Bonanza* character, especially during a remodeling project in the 1970s. The Spanish tile and rustic wood plank floor in the house was covered with carpeting. The wooden plank interior walls of the living room faded into the background under a coating of white paint. The window treatments were replaced and the dining room shutters came down as the west side dining room window was enlarged and hung with drapery. The brick pattern linoleum flooring in the kitchen was replaced with a yellow and gold sunburst pattern while the kitchen cabinets were painted a bright yellow. Doors were removed to create open corridors and walkways. The exterior was adorned with white trimmed windows and a white rail fence and hedges replaced yuccas in the front yard. Though it remained a beautiful home, the 1970s update degraded much of its former character. Casteel passed away while living at the Ponderosa II and the house stood empty until purchased by Louise and Tom Swann in 2011.

Though Casteel had made several alterations to the house, he had not done permanent damage. The missing doors, window hardware, light fixtures and dining room shutters had been stored in the attic, garage, or with neighbors who were pleased to return them back to the house. The Swanns used these materials to restore the house to its appearance during the Greene’s residence. The restoration was guided by the photo and print archives from the estate of Lynn Valentine, the home’s original interior decorator, which were graciously donated to the Ponderosa II by the Valentine family. Based on historic Valentine photos as well as images of the original studio set, the rooms have been restored closely to their original appearance during the 1960s when *Bonanza* was the number one television show in America. The exterior of the house was repainted to match the character and hue of the original timber. Because much of the restoration involved putting back materials that had been taken down but not discarded, the Ponderosa II today retains a high degree of design and material integrity (Figure 11).



Figure 11. The Ponderosa II, circa 1963 (left) and 2018 (right).

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On May 5, 2014, the Mesa City Council placed the Ponderosa II on the City of Mesa Historic Landmark Register (see Figures 12 and 13).

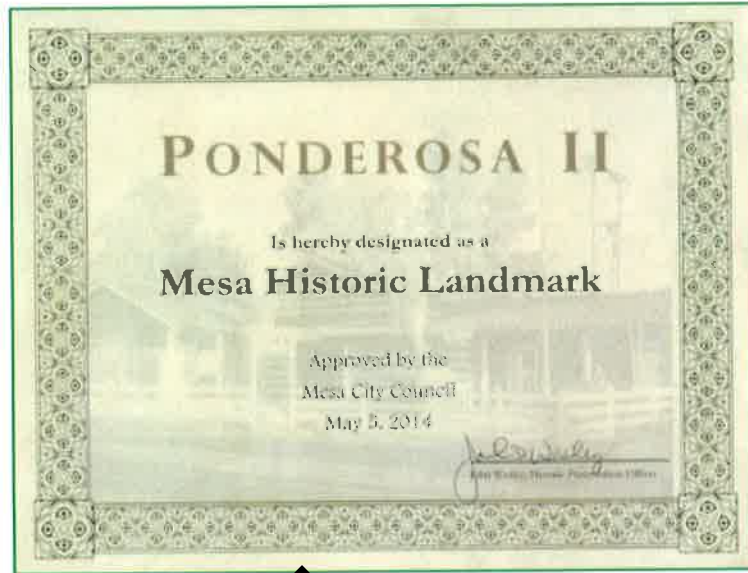


Figure 12. City of Mesa Historic Landmark Certificate

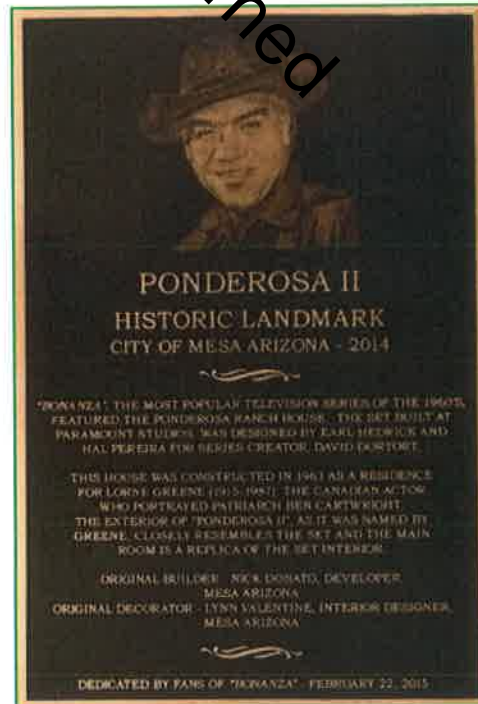


Figure 13. 12" x 18" Plaque placed at fence in front of property

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

**Period of Significance**

1963

**Significant Dates**

1963

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Nick Donato (Builder)

Lynn Valentine (Interior Designer)

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## SECTION 8

### Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Ponderosa II is recommended eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of significance of Community Planning and Development. That a single property may represent community planning and development is justified by understanding the historic theme of real estate marketing practices in the Phoenix metropolitan area during its rapid development in the 1950s and 1960s. More than mere advertising, marketing involved all aspects of planning and design intended to create a product consumers were willing to purchase. Factors such as location, price range, and amenities worked with less tangible factors as imagery and advertising to, first, draw attention to the product, and then to close a sale. To draw the attention of potential homebuyers, developers used not only the tools of advertising, they occasionally resorted to gimmickry and special events to create excitement for their products. It was for this purpose the Ponderosa II was constructed in 1962-63 as the flagship home for the marketing of the Apache Country Club Estates (ACCE).

The ACCE was an active-living adult community constructed north of Williams Air Force Base near the far eastern side of the City of Mesa along what was then the edge of residential development in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The Ponderosa II was constructed for actor Lorne Greene as a replica of the ranch house depicted on the popular television show *Bonanza*. The Ponderosa II served as a marketing tool for the ACCE, which prominently featured western theming in its selection of housing choices. The Ponderosa II also served as Greene's seasonal home when residing part-time in Mesa, where he became involved in community affairs. Greene, an investor in the development company, served as the marketing spokesman for the ACCE. The home reflects the theme of community planning and development in that it conveys the importance of marketing in the development of a new community. Greene's participation as an investor, promoter, and resident affected the character of the neighborhood, which offered homebuyers Ranch Style homes, elaborated with the buyer's choice of decorative embellishment. The ACCE was marketed as a new lifestyle residential community with active seniors and retirees as its target market. While the ACCE was not innovative in this area in the manner of Del Webb's Sun City on the far northwest side of the Phoenix metropolitan area, it was important locally in establishing east Mesa as another focal point for adult communities. The Ponderosa II is recommended eligible at the local level of significance with a period of significance of 1963, the year it was constructed and opened to the curious public.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

In this section, the case for the significance of the Ponderosa II is built on three related historic contexts. The first concisely describes the broad pattern of residential development in the Phoenix metropolitan area and Mesa specifically, with emphasis on a new form of community targeting older adults, both working and retired. The theme of real estate marketing is central to the Ponderosa II's significance as a property built to draw public attention and to make the Apache Country Club Estates stand out in a highly competitive market. The ACCE's developers were not alone in using a whimsical or awe-inspiring structure as an advertising tool, but the

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Ponderosa II is a rare surviving example of such a marketing device. The second historic context is the story of the ACCE's development and the construction and marketing of the Ponderosa II. As a new neighborhood, distant from even Mesa's historic downtown, the ACCE needed something outstanding, a gimmick perhaps, that would entice potential buyers to investigate. Construction of a house in the image of one of television's then-iconic homes, and the chance to meet Lorne Greene served that purpose well. The third context elaborates on the reason why the Ponderosa II resonated with the public. The Old West of the imagination had been a mainstay of popular culture throughout the twentieth century and, around 1960, was in the golden era of its television phase. The Ponderosa II tells a story of how popular cowboy culture could be made to serve the purposes of selling real estate, just as it was used to sell a wide variety of other products.

### Adult Residential Community Development in Mesa, Arizona

The history of single family residential development in Mesa has been documented in the survey and report, "Mesa Postwar Modern Single Family Subdivision Development, 1946-1973," sponsored by the City of Mesa and prepared by Liz Wilson and Debbie Abele in 2004. The ACCE represents a particularly important niche in Mesa's housing market, age-targeted communities developed for seniors at or near retirement.

Establishment of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934 marked the beginning of a sustained national policy promoting single family home ownership as the primary means of housing the American people. Through its insurance and regulatory guidelines, the FHA encouraged liberalized mortgage terms making homeownership more affordable to a larger portion of the American people. The goal of creating a nation of homeowners was also boosted by programs under the Veterans Administration, which offered additional incentives for returning veterans, as did favorable income tax treatment. The success of these programs can be seen in the Phoenix metropolitan area is evidenced by the rise in the rate of homeownership: 33 percent in 1940, 47 percent in 1950, 61 percent in 1960, and 67 percent by 1970. The FHA postwar regulations also had a notable impact on street layouts, lot sizes, and site plans of subdivisions. For example, FHA standards favored curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs that slowed traffic and minimized entries to the neighborhood, factors that created a safer play environment for children.

Mesa, Scottsdale, Tempe, Glendale, Peoria, and other cities surrounding the state's capital of Phoenix, are located in the lower Salt River Valley. Agriculture was the primary land use in the Salt River Valley prior to 1940 with an extensive system of irrigation infrastructure constructed to store and distribute water from the Salt River and its primary tributary, the Verde River. Over time, agricultural land use gave way to the spread of urban development and the various Valley communities grew together into a single metropolitan complex.

Two trends initiated during World War II affected the course of the Salt River Valley's development by bringing in industry and military bases. Although war industry was temporary, civic boosters used the precedent to encourage new industries to locate in the Phoenix area after the war, especially manufacturing in high tech sectors with such companies as Motorola, Sperry-



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Rand, and Honeywell. Also retained were two of its wartime air training facilities, Luke and Williams air force bases, on the west and east sides of the Valley, respectively. The Phoenix metropolitan area's population grew at a rapid pace. Phoenix's population grew from 65,414 to 439,170 between 1940 and 1960. The rate of growth in Mesa was even greater, rising from only 7,224 in 1940 to 33,772 in 1960 (VanderMeer 2010, 172-174).

Subdivisions of single-family houses were the primary model of residential development in the Phoenix metropolitan area. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the fully integrated land development firm, handling related phases of land acquisition, subdivision, design, construction, and sales, replaced the earlier model of relatively small firm builder-contractors serving on a client-by-client basis. Usually working outside existing city boundaries, builders like John Hall and Ralph Staggs purchased farm land and converted it into new neighborhoods, always featuring variations of, first, Minimal Traditional and, later, Ranch Style, houses. The subdivisions built by John F. Long, the era's most prolific developer, merged into what would become the Maryvale community, one of Phoenix's major sectors.

As the residential housing market expanded, developers explored the economic viability of niche markets. There was, for example, a brief enthusiasm for highrise apartments and condominiums close to central Phoenix in the late fifties and early sixties. A more substantial market was found in the older segment of the population. The Youngtown development in the Valley's west side begun by Ben Schleifer and Clarence Suggs in 1954 was the first in the Valley, and allegedly the earliest in the nation, focusing on adults over age fifty. Youngtown's modest success inspired Del E. Webb, generally a commercial property developer, to expand the concept with Sun City, a large, amenity-filled community opened in 1960 that would become a model for retirement communities nationwide.

Between 1956 and 1965, Mesa experienced a boom in population and residential development. An average of almost fifteen new subdivision plats were recorded each year. The average yearly construction rate was almost 800 new single-family houses. Projects specifically targeting senior adults and retirees were a part of this development mix. Mesa builder Ross Farnsworth started the first in 1958. Farnsworth's Dreamland Villa, located four miles east of Mesa's boundary, grew slowly from an initial thirteen acres into, by 1971, more than 600 acres, 2,100 houses, and more than 4,000 people. Dreamland Villa was designed around a golf course, which would become a distinguishing feature of large retirement communities. Ralph Staggs, one of the Valley's top three builders, joined the market in 1960 with Casa del Sol, a planned community of two-and three-bedroom houses. The golf course as center of community planning would be followed by subsequent development in east Mesa, including the Apache Country Club Estates and Leisure World. These latter two developments from the early 1960s and early 1970s, respectively, were located north of Williams Air Force Base, on Power Road north of Southern Road, then the virtual edge of the urban area (VanderMeer 2010, 210-212).

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The Phoenix area's most prolific homebuilder of the 1950s and 1960s, John F. Long, got his start in the real estate business in 1949 when he accepted an unsolicited offer for the home he was constructing for his family. It was a sellers' market during the housing shortage of the immediate postwar years, and marketing involved little more than opening a model home and running a newspaper advertisement. By the mid-1950s, the market was more competitive with dozens of builders vying for customers. Price and location were prime competitive factors, but so too, increasingly, were style and modern amenities for the home and neighborhood. While the most affordable housing tended to be constructed of concrete block, more expensive homes might include a mix of materials, such as brick veneer and board and batten wood siding to enhance the character of an otherwise typical Ranch Style house. Builders competed with amenities such as modern air conditioners and electric appliances. Some set aside land for neighborhood parks and by the late 1950s were designing neighborhoods around golf courses.

Strong competition meant that it was inadequate simply to open a model home and wait for customers to arrive. Seeking advantage through cooperation, several builders starting in 1956 held an annual "Parade of Homes" in which each constructed a model on a cul-de-sac street so that potential customers might visit each conveniently. Heavily advertised, these joint effort events attracted thousands of visitors. The opening of a new subdivision had to become an event if it was to gain notice and free food or prizes were common attractions. A celebrity made any opening a special event, as when James Garner, star of the television western "Maverick," greeted visitors to Imperial Homes' Del San Estates subdivision in 1960 (Figure 14).

Developer Bob Healy took gimmickry to an extreme in 1959 at his Dutch Village and Dutchtowne developments near Glendale, west of Phoenix. There he constructed a colorful 55-foot windmill to attract attention and even publicized a complementary message from the embassy of the Netherlands to



Figure 14. A celebrity appearance by actor James Garner brought attention to the Del San Estates development. Source: *The Arizona Republic*, 8 May 1960.

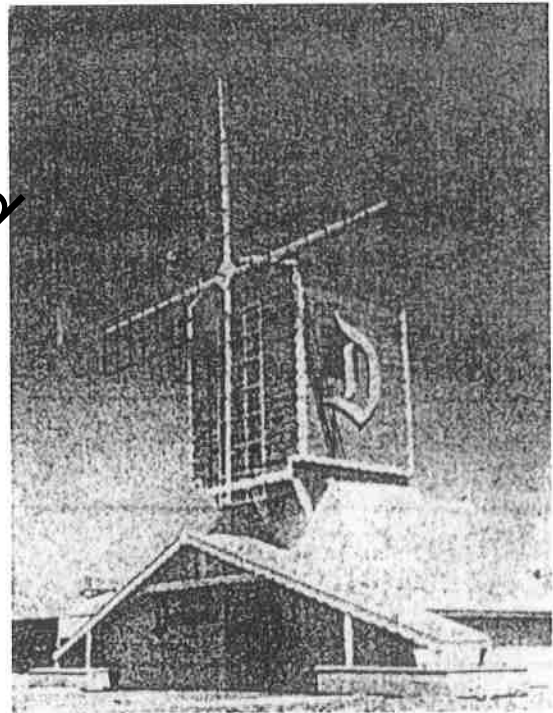


Figure 15. This windmill was constructed to publicize the Dutch-themed developments near Glendale. Source: *The Arizona Republic*, 20 September 1959.

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promote the romantic imagery of his new neighborhood (Figure 15). Also in 1959, K. T. Palmer and Tom Darlington constructed a 35-foot high, 62-foot long sundial to draw attention to the new town of Carefree they were developing north of Phoenix. Perhaps the most notable structures in Arizona specially built to promote real estate developments were the world's highest water fountain at Fountain Hills northeast of Phoenix, and the relocated London Bridge at Lake Havasu City along the Colorado River. These were built by Robert McCulloch and his real estate planner C. V. Wood in 1970 and 1971, respectively.

The initial marketing of the Apache Country Club Estates in 1961-62 emphasized the golf course and the active-living adult lifestyle. Lorne Greene's participation in the project and his decision to construct his own home there gave the ACCE its own unique building, a celebrity, and a new image to market. When construction of the Ponderosa II began in 1962, the marketing scheme was reshaped around it and Greene, with special note of the western-themed models available at the ACCE. When it opened in January 1963, the Ponderosa II attracted more attention for the ACCE than had previous efforts and helped to spur sales to fill out the new neighborhood. Lot sales at the ACCE may have suffered initially because of its distance from most of the Phoenix metro area. As with London Bridge at Lake Havasu City and the fountain at Fountain Hills, a specially-built structure like the Ponderosa II may have been particularly effective in enticing visitors to travel a long distance.

Development of the Apache Country Club Estates

The Ponderosa II was a house built to showcase the lifestyle marketed by the developers of the Apache Country Club Estates (Figure 16). The first phase of planning in 1960 involved layout of the golf course, which encompassed 138 of the development's 390 total acres. Curving roads were designed to maximize the number of building lots around the winding golf course. The ACCE subdivision had 877 building lots, of which 37 were designated for multiple housing condominiums. Initial construction included a sales office (Figure 17) and seven model homes. By July 1961, 56 lots were reported to have been sold to individuals.



Figure 16. The Apache Country Club Estates marketed an active living lifestyle. Source: ACCE sales brochure, 1963.

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The golf course, club house, and pool were the focal points of the new community. Phoenix historian Philip VanderMeer has written on how golf course communities were popular during the 1950s through the 1970s in Phoenix and surrounding communities. A golf course was a marker of the higher end of the residential development market and many such communities were gated, although not the ACCE. Housing in new communities varied considerably according to the developer's target market. The initial phase of Sun City had emphasized relatively small, simple Ranch Style homes for seniors who no longer needed a larger family home. Leisure World, another adult community built just west of the ACCE in the 1970s offered an even more affordable neighborhood of manufactured housing. The ACCE marketed to adults forty and over who wanted comfortable and relatively stylish homes. The first homes built were in the range of \$18,000 to \$30,000. Advertisements indicated prices ranging from about \$15,000 to \$27,000, depending on whether the model was two or three bedrooms, the choice of stylistic embellishments, and its location. To compare, the median price of a single-family home in 1963 was approximately \$18,000.

The difference between the lifestyle marketed at the ACCE from that offered by competing developers of communities like Sun City or, later, Leisure World reflected the participation of the most prominent of the ACCE's investors, Morris (Nick) Donato and Lorne Greene. Donato was a homebuilder in Mesa, a vice president and primary builder for the ACCE, and the builder of the Ponderosa II. It is not known if Greene was one of the ACCE's initial investors; he does not



Figure 17. This home at the southeast corner of Pueblo and Saranac avenues was the sales office for the ACCE. The distinctive roofline was a feature of the then popular Polynesian styling, which also occurs in a simpler form on the home next door to the Ponderosa II (see Fig. 4).

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Figure 18. This early 1962 ACCE advertisement emphasized the golf course amenity. The home pictured is two lots south of the Ponderosa II, which was then yet to be constructed.

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appear in the development's early advertisements (Figure 18). How Donato and Greene became associated is not known, but Donato had previously built in Spokane, Washington a replica of a house featured in the 1948 movie *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, starring Cary Grant and Myrna Loy. Donato later was builder of the Desert Sands Golf and Country Club in Mesa, which opened in 1969 to great success (Figure 19).

Greene, at the height of his popularity as the star of one of television's highest rated series, *Bonanza*, became not only an investor, but a resident of the new community. He could afford to build a replica of his fictional television ranch house and might have placed it anywhere in the West. He chose Mesa because of its admirably mild winter climate and because he could avail himself of work opportunities like filming television commercials at the nearby Apacheland Movie Ranch outside the *Bonanza* schedule.



Figure 19. Ponderosa II builder Nick Donato (left), his wife Iris (center) and Lorne Greene (right).

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The ACCE began to feature Greene in its advertising in 1962, which publicized the construction of the Ponderosa II as something for fans to come and see (Figure 20). Besides promoting "a new era of leisure living," these ads emphasized the romantic, Old West embellishments available in models with names such as the "Desert," the "Texan," the "Ranchero," and the "Adobe Hacienda" plans.

The climax of the ACCE marketing scheme was the open house held on January 14, 1963 to mark completion of the Ponderosa II (Figure 21). Visitors enjoyed the chance to walk through an accurate reproduction of television's Ponderosa and to meet "Ben Cartwright" in person. Doubtless many visitors also toured the ACCE's model homes, though research has not revealed how many home sites may have been purchased that day.



Figure 20. This 1962 ACCE advertisement emphasized Greene as a celebrity and as a resident of the new community.

Returned

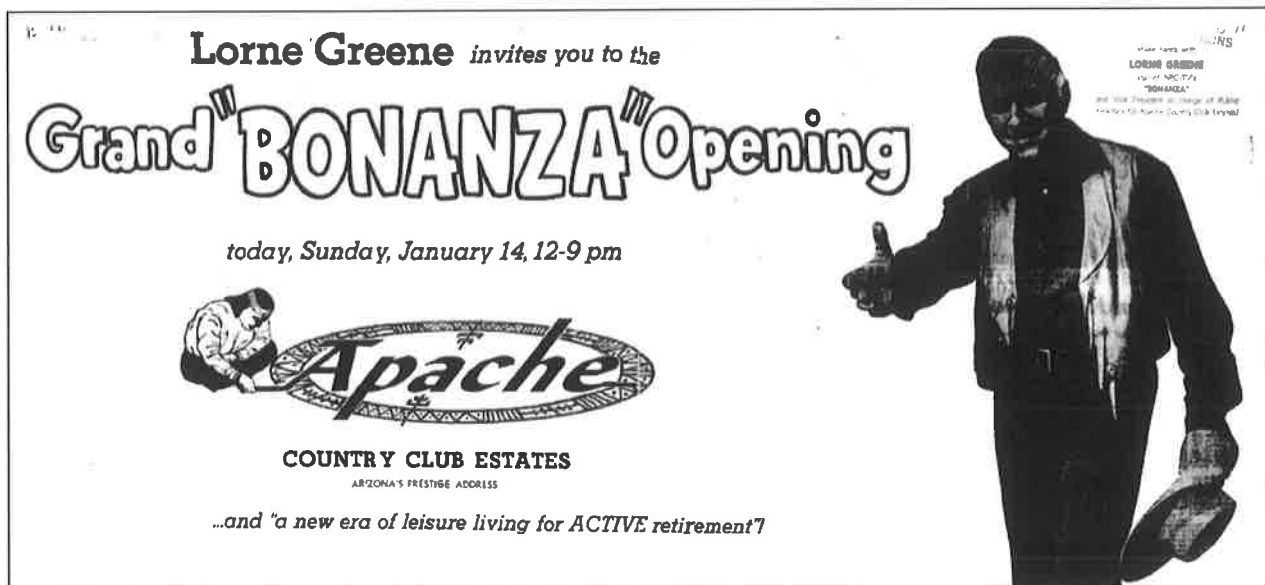


Figure 21. Advertisement from 1963 for the open house celebrating completion of the Ponderosa II.

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The Ponderosa II exemplifies the context of the marketing of active living adult communities in Mesa during the 1960s. Visually, it is an architectural novelty and was the most elaborate of the Character Ranch houses constructed in the ACCE. Homebuyers could not purchase a “Ponderosa Model” for their own *Bonanza* house, but could purchase a model with an Old West flare, or a Polynesian or American Colonial look, if that were their taste (Figure 22). To understand the appeal of such romanticism, additional context follows describing the origins of the Ranch Style from Cliff May’s work published by *Sunset* magazine through the immediate post-World War II era, when it was promoted by the Federal Housing Administration as an appropriate design for mass-produced housing. This context is supplemented by additional material demonstrating that this era represents the “heyday” of the Old West in American popular culture. While the



Figure 22. Two plans offered to home buyers in the Apache Country Club Estates. Using a similar form and layout, the houses could be customized with a variety of character features. Less ambitious than the Ponderosa II, the “Adobe Hacienda” plan (top) was a western-themed option while the “Mt. Vernon” plan (bottom) offered a touch of American colonial elegance. Source: ACCE sales brochure, 1963.

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While the Ponderosa II was a novelty, it was a successful marketing tool connecting a popular theme in American culture to the home building industry. Construction and marketing of the Ponderosa II brought popular cowboy culture into the service of real estate boosterism by materializing the image of a popular television program's studio set as a real house in order to promote the sale of residential lots (Figure 23).



*welcome...*

to "a new era of  
*leisure living*"

from

**LORNE GREENE**

*star of*

**NBC-TV'S "BONANZA"**

"Active retirement is not just a phrase — it's a new way of living. They say life begins at 40 — that's true if you're 40 years young. Many of us, after the children have grown up and established their own families, suddenly find a void. Here at Apache Country Club Estates you will find the only community of its kind in America — a community of mutual interests — but where you set your own pace — a community that offers you every facility for recreation and relaxation. It is my pleasure to present to you the Apache Country Club Estates story . . ."

Figure 23. Lorne Greene in western costume as spokesman for the Apache Country Club Estates. Source: ACCE sales brochure, 1963.



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Lorne Greene, Bonanza, and the Apache Country Club Estates

Lorne Greene began his career as the chief radio announcer for the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) radio from 1939 to 1942 and became known as the "Voice of Canada." Although his distinctive voice had propelled him into news casting, he had earlier shown an interest in acting during his education at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. After serving briefly in the military in 1945, Greene co-founded the Academy of Radio Arts in Canada as well as the Jupiter Theatre. In 1953, he moved to the United States to pursue an acting career, making numerous appearances on various telecasts before landing the role of Ben Cartwright on *Bonanza* in 1959. *Bonanza* was an American western television series that aired from September 12, 1959 to January 16, 1973. Lasting 14 seasons and 430 episodes it still continues to air in syndication. It centers on the Cartwright family, who lived on a fictional ranch known as the Ponderosa in the area around Lake Tahoe, Nevada. The show starred Lorne Greene, Pernell Roberts, Dan Blocker, and Michael Landon. *Bonanza* ranked #1 in the television ratings from 1964 to 1967 and was never out of the top five shows between 1961 and 1970. As NBC's first regular weekly color drama introduced in 1959, the show was instrumental in the growth of color



Figure 24. Lorne Greene, in suite and tie, was a special guest on the Luncheon in Mesa radio show. Local television cowboy entertainer Lew King is on the far right.

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television throughout the 1960s. After the series premiered in 1959, the set quickly became one of the most recognized “homes” in America. The familiar roofline and classic Old Tahoe Style architecture has graced thousands of photos and memorabilia items.

In 1969, Greene was appointed “Officer of the Order of Canada,” which is Canada’s highest civilian award, “for services to the Performing Arts and to the community.” Greene established ties to Mesa both before and after the building of the Ponderosa II. In the 1950s he appeared as a special guest on a popular radio show called “Luncheon in Mesa” (Mead, 1988). He also appeared in employee motivational short films for Chevrolet, Bonanza’s sole sponsor, filmed at nearby Apacheland Movie Ranch (Sheffer, 2009) and at the General Motors Proving ground in east Mesa.



Figure 25. Lorne and Nancy Greene inside the Ponderosa II.

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Greene was involved in another ambitious Ponderosa project in Arizona. The Ponderosa Ranch House Caravan was a full-scale duplicate of the set at Paramount Pictures. A NBC Enterprises press release issued at the time states:

The lightweight traveling Ponderosa is complete in every detail right down to Ben Cartwright's Bible. While the original set weighs over 100,000 pounds, the portable Ranch House Caravan totals less than 12,000 pounds.

The hardware for the windows, doors and shutters plus the andirons for the great fireplace are all hand forged, full scale replicas of the originals on the "Bonanza" set at Paramount Studios, Hollywood.

It took more than three months to build a lightweight structure that would maintain the authentic appearance of the original "80-year-old" structure inside and out. The whole house fits neatly into two 40-foot trailers with furnishings fitting into a third, and can be erected or disassembled by six men in less than a day.

The Caravan was built by Walker Display Co., Phoenix, Arizona. It debuted at the Arizona State Fair in 1968.

Once *Bonanza* left network television in 1972, the Ponderosa gradually faded from the memories of those leading busy lives and raising young families. Western movies and TV fell out of favor as science fiction, sitcoms and crime dramas filled up the nation's airwaves. The Apache Country Club Estates Homeowners Association, Inc. dissolved and was replaced by the Golden Hills Homeowner's Association, Inc. in January 1984 (Slattery 1994).

#### ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

While the Ponderosa II is recommended to the National Register of Historic Places under the area of significance of Community Planning and Development, additional context related to the brief popularity of the Character Ranch and to the broad popularity of Old West, or cowboy culture, in 1960s America, provides a richer appreciation of house's importance. Both of these minor themes were embodied in the design of the ACCE and in the lifestyle marketed by its developers.

#### The Ranch Style and the Character (or Styled) Ranch

Prior to the Great Depression, the American housing market—at the risk of oversimplification—was divided into three parts. The market's high end featured homes designed by architects or custom homebuilders catering to clients able to afford individualized residences. At the opposite side of the market, the poor made due with older housing, multi-family accommodations, or for the very poor, ramshackle shacks in slums. For the broadly defined middle class, commercial housing producers developed housing products that were as modest or elaborate as the buyer's budget allowed. Commercial housing builders developed methods to make home construction less costly. Innovative builders like Harry Culver in southern California organized vertically integrated housing development firms, which handled multiple phases of real estate development from land acquisition, subdivision, sales and construction. After World War II, such methods

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spread throughout the country and were exemplified by builders like William Levitt, who's Levittown in New York became the model of the postwar suburb.

The Ranch Style house and master planned communities such as the ACCE reflected innovations in the housing market promoted by the federal government through agencies like the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Housing construction had been severely curtailed by the Great Depression and restrictions on building materials during World War II. To revive the market, the FHA provided mortgage insurance and liberalized terms of debt to encourage homeownership. The FHA also intervened to expand the market by regulating other aspects of the housing market affecting land subdivision, transportation infrastructure, and guidelines for style. As an insurer, the FHA supported stability in real estate values. In the late 1930s and immediately after the war, when the priority was on reviving a moribund housing industry, the FHA discouraged elaborate decoration of the kind sometimes found in older, Period Revival neighborhoods, as well as experimentations with Modernism. The result was the simplified Minimal Traditional Style, which provided affordable housing, especially to young and first-time homebuyers.

At the close of the Korean War in 1953, the federal government ended the last of its wartime restrictions on the supply of building materials and the housing market could cater to the demands of an increasingly prosperous middle class. To support the expansion of the housing market, the FHA widened the availability of its mortgage insurance to higher cost housing and allowed increasingly elaborate decoration. By this time, the Ranch Style had emerged as the most popular housing product, especially for housing constructed on the integrated model of large-scale subdivision developers. The flexible form of the ranch house could carry a wide variety of exterior decorative forms. From the mid-1950s into the early 1960s, homebuyers again began to look for charm, romance, or other emotive associations with their homes. Increasingly elaborate decoration drew from history and other cultures, resulting in what architectural historians now characterize as Character Ranch Style. Although not referred to as period revival, ranch houses of this era displayed historic styles evoking, for example, the Old West, the Old World, or Polynesia.

During the Period Revival era, architectural stylistic development thrived in California. The Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival were largely the products of California architects whose influence quickly spread across the American Southwest. A smaller movement, the Rancho Revival, also flourished briefly in California, based on the adobe and wood-craft architecture associated with the historic era of the 1830s and 1840s when Hispanic building traditions were modified by the carpenters from New England who settled there prior to American acquisition.

The transformation of Rancho Revival into the California Ranch is generally credited to Cliff May (1909-1989). May simplified the rancho, opening up its enclosed courtyards and modernizing it for construction with contemporary materials like frame, brick, and block rather than adobe. When commercial tract housing began in earnest after 1945, the California Ranch house became the ubiquitous form for single-family residences from relatively small buildings aimed at the median-income homebuyer to sprawling custom forms. The California Ranch lost most of the Spanish/Mexican styling of its progenitors as most tract housing typically omitted the clay tile roof and stucco exterior walls. By the mid-fifties, however, prosperity allowed

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American homebuyers to indulge again in domestic decoration and the Ranch Style (losing its California moniker as its popularity spread across the country) became a blank canvas on which architects could apply decoration and elaboration. Two-story, split-level versions expanded the architectural palette from the initial one-story model and historicist decorations such as Swiss chalet details hid all previous connection to a Hispanic past. Hispanicization would return, however, in the sixties in the form of the faddishly popular slump block, a form of concrete block resembling an adobe brick, and arches. By late in the twentieth century, after Ranch Style's popularity had run its course, builders in the Southwest would turn to stucco-on-frame tract housing, again with tile roofs and arches. Italian influences would also reemerge in the so-called Tuscan variation of these Spanish Colonial Revival-like tract homes of the early twenty-first century (McAllister 2013, 602-603).

The most popular of the decorated variations of the Ranch style in the fifties and sixties referenced not Spanish motifs, but rather those of the American Old West. American culture in the 1920s linked the rancho with the ranch of American western tradition. The cowboy emerged from mere frontier range worker to an iconic representative of American ideals. The high place of the cowboy in popular culture was in no small part due to Hollywood Western movies. Cowboy actors like William S. Hart and Harry Carey built ranch style homes employing

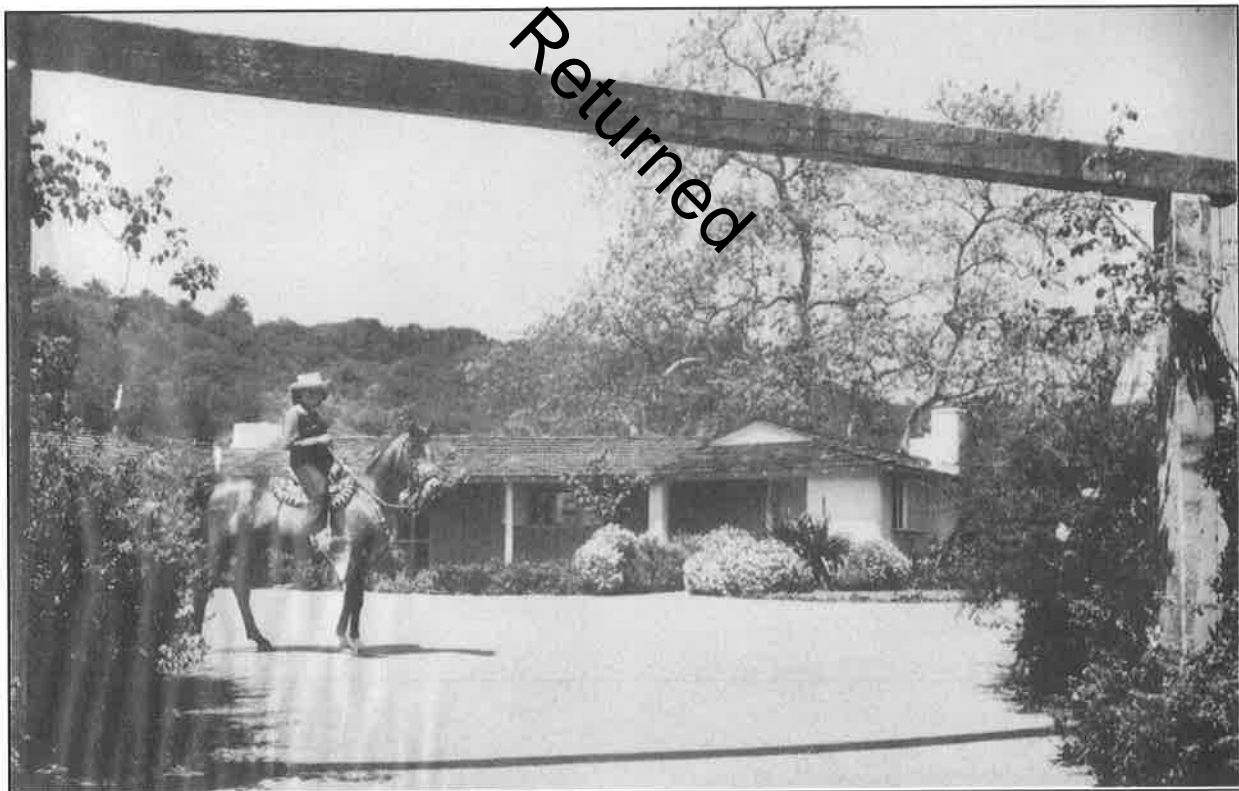


Figure 26. The California Ranch House marketed for its romantic connection to Old West imagery. From *Sunset Western Ranch Houses*, by the Editorial Staff of Sunset Magazine in collaboration with Cliff May, (San Francisco, California: Lane Publishing Company, 1946), 148.

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elements of high style Spanish Colonial Revival with rustic variations on the rancho and American ranch. The blending of Spanish Colonial Revival motifs with decorative and cultural connections evocative of America's popular cowboy culture resulted in an amalgam that we may refer to as Southwestern Romanticism, its primary form, the California Ranch House. Two of its important visual features are the use of board-and-batten and shake roofs. In the hands of a master architect like Cliff May, the low-lying form of the ranch house suited a new vogue of indoor-outdoor living in romantic elegance (Figure 26). To the merchant builder, the California Ranch House served as a model for countless residential subdivisions across the Southwest built in the three decades following World War II (McMillian 188-194).

The ranch house was a modern building form designed primarily with the mass housing market in mind. In its simplest, Minimal Traditional form, it lacked virtually all decoration and was little more than a rectangular box suitable for meeting the immediate needs of the post-war housing crisis (1945-1953). In its Southwestern form it expanded in size, spreading across increasingly large lots. Such Ranch houses were said to "ramble" or "sprawl," especially for high-end, custom models. This coincided with ideals of fifties-era domesticity—a new form for the single-family house where electric appliances replaced accommodations for servants. This became idealized in the marketing of so-called "indoor-outdoor living," a mode of domesticity especially suitable to the American Southwest where with the aid of a backyard pool and barbecue, family life was supposed to be lived taking full advantage of the mild, sunny climate. Extensive window glazing and sliding glass doors enhanced this indoor-outdoor connectivity.

The characteristic features of the Ranch house include (*Sunset Western Ranch Houses* 1946, ix, 32, 34, 38-39, 42,45, 48-49, 60-61):

- Single story, with a low to the ground profile. Increasing land cost would eventually rein in the Ranch's sprawling character and two-story, split-level variations signaled the style's eventual demise.
- Asymmetrical floor plan. In its simplest commercial builders' product, the rectangular floor plan would be modified with L- or U-shaped plans. In its sprawling, or rambling mode, these wings often extended at obtuse angles, helping to define backyard spaces.
- Open floor plans. To cut costs, builders increasingly omitted space taken for hallways and interior walls, opening up the primary living spaces, for example, by leaving dining area open to the kitchen. Combined with larger windows, the Ranch house could feel very open, although not to the extent that often appeared in contemporary modernist designs.
- Large windows. Improvements to air conditioning technology as well as affordable plate glass allowed for greater window space, although rarely of the full floor-to-ceiling height except where facing the back yard.
- Broad porches formed from overhanging eaves. These porches both shielded windows from sun exposure and provided transitional space between indoors and outdoors.
- Pitched roofs of hip, gable or cross-gable form. Particularly in custom models and where building codes allowed, shake roofs provided one of the most distinctive of decorative features suggestive of the Old West ranch.
- Carport/garages. The Ranch house fully accommodated the automobile. From an initial attached carport, the garage was soon enclosed as a space as distinctive and important as any other room in the house.

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- Simplified decoration. In its Southwestern “cowboy” form, the Ranch house often included board-and-batten siding although often over only a portion of the façade. Non-operative shutters and porches with X-railing between posts enhanced the ranch imagery.

The Ponderosa II embodies all of these characteristics, apart from the last, as its exterior and especially its interior decoration are more elaborate than the typical Character Ranch.

### The Cowboy in Popular Culture and Its Influence on Arizona Architecture

After its completion, Lorne Greene held an open house at the Ponderosa II. Some 3,700 people came in a single weekend to see the popular television star and the image of *Bonanza*'s patriarchal house materialized as a real home. The curiosity drawing such numbers reflected the popularity not merely of a television program but the phenomenon of the “Western” and the cowboy in popular American culture. Historian William W. Savage, Jr., suggested that the cowboy hero served two principal functions in American culture: as a transmitter of idealized social values and to sell merchandise (Savage 1979, 150). The Ponderosa II demonstrates the validity of this thesis as it was intended as a marketing tool for the Apache Country Club Estates, just as *Bonanza* itself was a marketing tool for RCA (parent company to the NBC television network) to sell color televisions. A brief synopsis of the cowboy in popular culture and its special relevance to Arizona reveals a greater depth of meaning in the Ponderosa II's architectural character.

The transformation of the cowboy from laborer on the range to heroic paragon of American virtues occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The entrepreneurial William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody created a Wild West show featuring trick riding, displays of marksmanship, and pageants that were morality tales of the triumphant march of American settlers across the continent. In 1884, Cody recast a former Texas cowhand, William Levi Taylor, into Buck Taylor, “King of the Cowboys.” Taylor even became a fictional character in a series of dime novels, which, in addition to selling more tickets to Cody's show, established the cowboy as a central character and the West as a setting in literature (Savage 1979, 109-112). Starting with *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912), Zane Grey would perfect this first expression of the cowboy in popular culture in a long series of popular novels. Respected by few, but enjoyed by many, the western remains a popular literary genre.

The bandits portrayed in Edwin S. Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) introduced the cinematic cowboy to the American public, and though the movies portrayed at least as many villainous cowboys, it was the heroic cowboy, portrayed in the silent era by such stars as William S. Hart and Tom Mix, whom the ticket-buying public followed. From his breakthrough role in *Stagecoach* (1939) to his Academy Award-winning role in *True Grit* (1969), John Wayne would become Hollywood's leading western film actor at the box office. It mattered little that Wayne's *True Grit* character, Rooster Cogburn, was a U.S. marshal, or that Gary Cooper in *High Noon* (1952) also portrayed a marshal (as did various actors in the role of Wyatt Earp, to say nothing about the Lone Ranger). All were Hollywood cowboys who had dramatic (or comedic) situations to resolve, few of which involved cattle. The cowboy of popular culture had been separated from actual range workers from the beginning. Late nineteenth century historians from Frederick

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Jackson Turner to Theodore Roosevelt had seen in the conquest of the West the foundation of American character. Roosevelt, “that damned cowboy” in Mark Hanna’s words, held up the cowboy as the embodiment of an aggressive, yet noble masculinity. The heroic cowboy of popular imagination was, in historian Savage’s words, “stout of heart, strong of limb, quick of wit, and endowed with remarkable coordination of hand and eye” (Savage 1979, 96-97). The ticket-buying public, wishing to escape the realities of the Great Depression for at least the length of a double feature, supported a stream of B-level westerns, which the studios churned out in great quantity. For example, William Boyd portrayed Hopalong Cassidy through sixty-six films and fifty-two television programs from 1935 into the 1950s.

Hollywood and radio westerns were often aimed at children, boys especially, who could be expected to pressure parents to purchase products marketed by the program’s sponsors. Sponsors included General Mills (*The Lone Ranger*) and Doublemint Gum (*Gene Autry’s Melody Ranch*). Singing cowboys, such as Autry and Roy Rogers, were also popular during this era and likewise aimed for a juvenile audience. Every program had merchandise, like Hopalong Cassidy suits popular in the early 1950s, as well as comic books, games, and toys featuring their favorite cowboy character. Cowboy comics were a popular genre until replaced by superheroes (Savage 1979, 147).

Over the course of the 1950s, the western genre evolved away from a juvenile market in favor of new programs directed to adults who, after all, were the spenders of the family. The singing cowboys and B movies of film gave way to new programs, such as *Gunsmoke* (Chesterfield cigarettes), *Maverick* (Kaiser Aluminum), *Wagon Train* (Ford), and *The Rifleman* (Proctor and Gamble). *Bonanza*, which debuted in 1959, would run for fourteen seasons, second only to *Gunsmoke* as the most enduring television western. Most of these series featured elevated levels of violence compared to earlier Hollywood fare (apart from the cinematic deaths of countless Indians). *The High Chaparral* (1967-1971), a series revolving around a rancher living in the Arizona territory, which was filmed at the Old Tucson movie studio, was eventually dropped in part due to criticism of excessive violence (“The High Chaparral” 2016). The television western as a popular genre faded during the 1970s, replaced by the detective series set in a contemporary context. The cowboy as anti-hero became the new staple of the movies as in *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), and *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976). *Urban Cowboy* (1980) updated the western to a contemporary setting symbolized by high style western fashion, country music, and mechanical bull riding.

The influence of cowboy culture was particularly powerful in a state like Arizona, where tourism was an important industry. The dude ranch, a tourist facility in which guests could participate in more or less genuine ranching operations had flourished since the early 1900s. These remained an important economic player for some communities, such as Wickenburg, which advertised itself as the “Dude Ranch Capital of the World.” Arizona was also featured prominently in movie and television westerns, from scenic Monument Valley to the sets of Old Tucson. In 1960, an investor group opened the Apacheland Movie Ranch, located east of Mesa near the scenic Superstition Mountains (see Figure 27). The studio was used throughout the sixties for filming episodes of television westerns such as “The Rifleman,” “Zane Grey Theater,” “Wanted: Dead or Alive,” “Death Valley Days,” and “Have Gun, Will Travel” (Apacheland Movie Ranch 2016).



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Figure 27. Lorne Greene in character as Ben Cartwright in a commercial for Chevrolet, filmed at Apacheland Movie Ranch, just east of Mesa, with the Superstition Mountains in the background.

In the two decades following World War II, cowboy culture affected architecture and urban design in Arizona as tourism boosters sought to enhance the state's Old West image, even as other boosters were promoting its modernity to attract modern industry. Santa Fe, New Mexico and Santa Barbara, California served as models for this plan of urban design in that both of these cities had during the 1920s established legally binding construction guidelines intended to promote a romanticized Hispanic heritage. Santa Fe and Santa Barbara established variations of the Spanish Colonial Revival style as official community styles. At least two similar efforts were attempted in Arizona, only in both cases the movement was to promote frontier-style western architecture.

In September 1945, with the war only days over, a group of Phoenix boosters, including architects Charles Gilmore and Leslie Mahoney, participated in the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce's "frontier restoration committee." The group was formed as an expression of concern that "the priceless heritage of the old West" in local building was being lost. Lewis

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Hass, businessman and civic leader, asked the committee to compare Phoenix with cities like Santa Barbara and Santa Fe, which “reek with atmosphere, either real or spurious” and warned that Phoenix was on the verge of losing its marketable western image if an effort was not made to save some of the atmosphere and flavor of the West. Richard D. Searles, the committee’s chair and a representative of Transcontinental and Western Airlines offered, “What we need here in Phoenix, in addition to sunshine and climate, is some atmosphere and avenues of entertainment in order to make it worth the tourist’s while.” While they understood that architecture should reflect the period in which people live, the committee’s members were unanimous in their opinion that a modified Mexican-Southwestern style of architecture could be promoted without sacrificing modern comforts and conveniences. Burke Payne, a real estate developer, suggested that the city encourage Southwestern architecture, much as Santa Barbara and Santa Fe promoted their own distinctive styles. He also suggested development of an Indian or Mexican “village” as an entertainment and shopping venue. None of this came to pass. By 1945, Phoenix was simply too large and diverse to be guided by a single architectural vision (*The Arizona Republic*, 17 September 1945, 2).

Mid-century Scottsdale, located east of Phoenix, was relatively rural with a population of only about two thousand, but it possessed outsized ambitions to become an important city. McCormick Ranch, located north of town was a model modern ranch with a national reputation for its Angus cattle and Arabian horses. The Scottsdale Chamber of Commerce coined the motto “The West’s Most Western Town” in 1947 and the city adopted it as its official slogan when it incorporated in 1951. Enthusiastic businessmen, playing to the tourist traffic, began nailing board-and-batten across existing buildings or building new in western theme. In one example, a group of businessmen and property owners on East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue between Scottsdale Road and Brown Avenue, hired architect Lester Laraway to design a retail complex in “dignified Western” theme—covered walks with unfinished posts, shake roofs, and rock or pine storefronts. In 1952, Scottsdale designed its new Winfield Scott School with western features like red brick walls, wide roof overhangs, natural finish hardwood doors, and a shake roof. In 1959, the city installed 200 genuine gas lamps in downtown and even a few private subdivisions installed gaslights as thematic decoration. Developer James Matthews even designed cabanas and recreation facilities at his Oasis trailer park in Western motif. In addition to mere building styling, several businesses played extravagantly on the Western theme, such as the restaurant and mini-theme park Rawhide, the Pinnacle Peak Patio, and the Pink Pony Steakhouse. Many of these businesses have closed in recent years. Still, the city hosts a major rodeo, operates an equestrian center at West World, and recently opened the Scottsdale Museum of the West (*The Arizona Republic* 26 May 1952, 12; 12 September 1952, 16; 26 August 1956, 5:10; 20 December 1959, 5:20).

A character-defining feature of architecture illustrating the influence of Western themes in the 1950s and 1960s is the use of board and batten. Whether alone or combined with other materials like red brick or slump block, which imitates the look of adobe, board and batten evoked the image of the Old West. At its height in the 1950s, many owners of commercial buildings remodeled their exteriors using board and batten to create the image of an Old West streetscape, as in Gilbert’s old downtown. Cowboy culture affected architectural design also through modest use of decorative features like pine or redwood trim, wagon wheels, decorative wood shutters, and cedar shake roofs applied to otherwise standard tract housing product in the 1950s. The

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sprawling Ranch Style house, especially custom-built homes, displayed western motifs to advantage. Where the western look most influenced architecture was in single-family residences in the Ranch Style, which became increasingly elaborate in decoration in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In this regard, the Ponderosa II was the most elaborate of Ranch Style homes of the era. It was a perfect symbol of its era, drawing not from any authentic architectural style from the nineteenth century West, but from the set of a television series.

## CONCLUSION

The Ponderosa II is a large Ranch Style house built in 1962-63. The house was constructed for actor Lorne Greene to resemble the Ponderosa ranch house set as depicted on the television series *Bonanza*, which was an American Old West television series airing from September 12, 1959 to January 16, 1973. In addition to serving as a home, the Ponderosa II provided a marketing tool and image for the Apache Country Club Estates development, an active-living adult community in east Mesa. As a marketing tool, the Ponderosa II is related to the specially-built buildings and structures designed to attract public attention to a real estate development, such as the Dutchtowne windmill in Glendale and the fountain at Fountain Hills. Its style links it to the brief movement during the 1940s and into the 1960s to use Old West architectural theming as a part of community planning and development, as in nearby Scottsdale and Gilbert. The Ponderosa II is recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, at the local level, as a building conveying the theme of Community Planning and Development. The period of significance is 1963, the year construction of the house was completed and opened to the public to visit and promote sales at the ACCE.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Returned

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.49

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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1. Latitude: 33.403730

Longitude: -111.682850

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the nominated property is the approximately .49 acres enclosed by the Edgewater Drive cul-de-sac on the south, the boundary with the neighboring property on the southwest, the boundary with the neighboring property on the southeast, and an approximately 325 foot, arc shaped boundary with the Arizona Golf Resort on the northwest, north, and northeast sides of the property.



Figure 18. Satellite photo of the nominated property with the boundary of the property and the location of the well and trough shown in red.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the legal property line of the lot (Maricopa County parcel number 218-55-023 historically associated with the Ponderosa II since its construction.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Louise M. Swann and Thomas A. Swann (with editing by William Collins, SHPO)  
organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number: 602 S. Edgewater Dr.  
city or town: Mesa state: AZ zip code: 85208  
e-mail: tswann@mesa-tech.org  
telephone: (480) 278-5647  
date: August 2017

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Returned

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### Photo Log

Name of Property: Ponderosa II  
City or Vicinity: Mesa  
County: Maricopa State: Arizona  
Photographer: Thomas Swann

Date Photographed: April 8, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 14 . South façade, facing north
- 2 of 14 . South façade, facing north
- 3 of 14 . South façade, facing north
- 4 of 14 . South entrance, facing north
- 5 of 14 . South façade, facing west-northwest
- 6 of 14 . West façade, facing northeast
- 7 of 14 . West façade, facing east-southeast
- 8 of 14 . West façade, facing southeast
- 9 of 14 . North façade, facing southeast
- 10 of 14 . North façade, facing south
- 11 of 14 . North façade, facing southwest

Photographer: Eric Vondy

Date Photographed: January 8, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 12 of 14 . Interior. "Ben's Office." Facing south
- 13 of 14 . Interior. Stairway to attic, Great Room. Facing east-southeast
- 14 of 14 . Interior. Great Room and Fireplace. Facing northwest

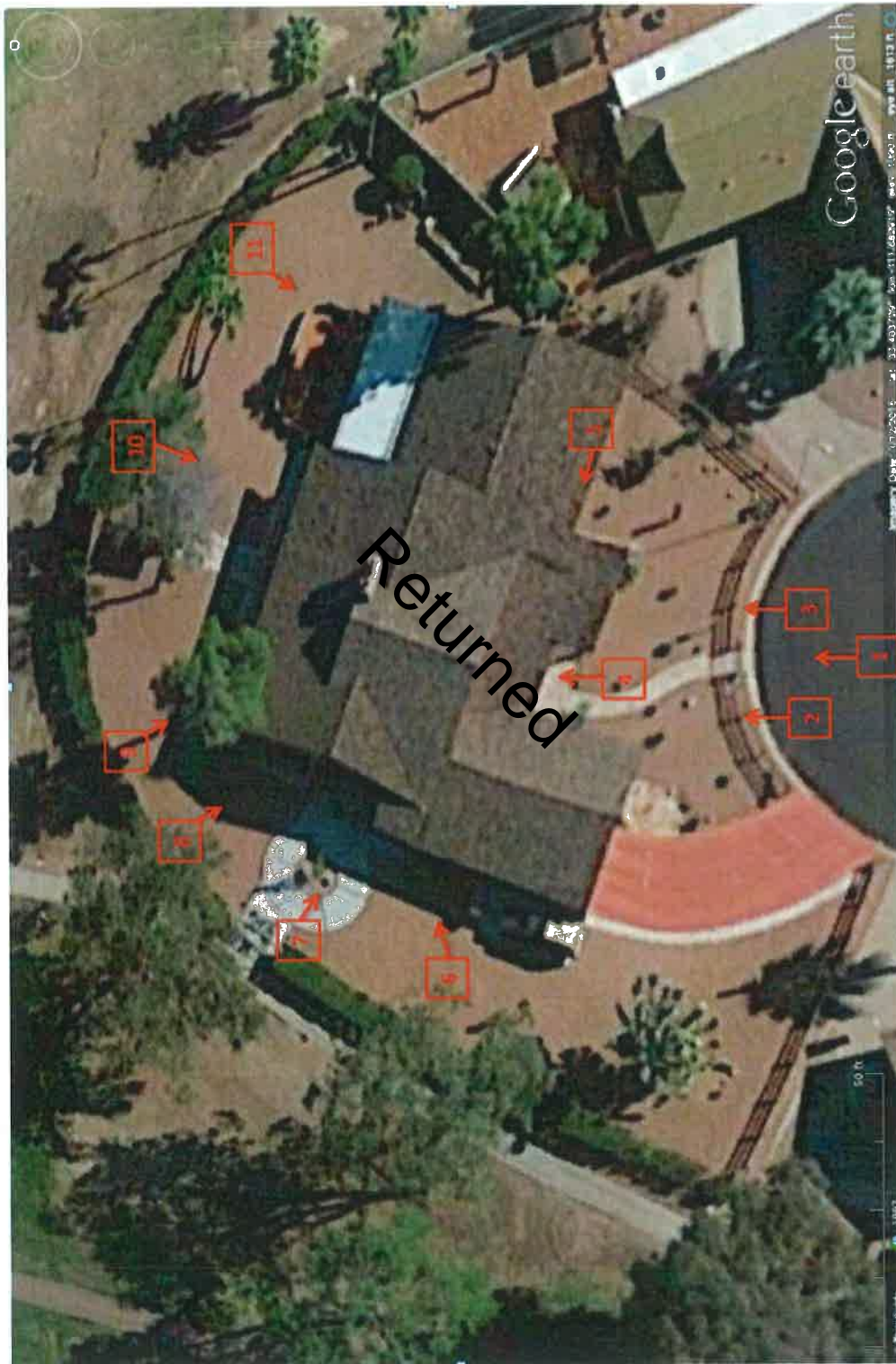
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.469 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC

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### Photograph Guide



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**Photo 10 of 14**



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**Photo 14 of 14**



Returned



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 1/16/2018      Date of Pending List: 2/21/2018      Date of 16th Day: 3/8/2018      Date of 45th Day: 3/2/2018      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      3/2/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Reviewer Lisa Deline

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239

Date 3/8/18

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments:  No      see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places**

**Comments  
Evaluation/Return Sheet**

**Property Name:** Ponderosa II  
**Property Location:** Mesa, Maricopa Co., AZ  
**Reference Number:** SG 100002146  
**Date of Return:** 3/6/2018

**Reason for Return**

The Ponderosa II is being returned for substantive corrections. The nomination was submitted under Criterion A, at the local level, for significance in Community Planning and Development. The period of significance is 1963.

Issues

While the nomination does a good job in developing contexts for local suburban development and for the Ranch Style, it does not adequately address the significance of this property under Criterion A, for Community Planning and Development. In 1960, the planning for the Apache Country Club Estates (ACCE) first started and included a golf course and 877 building lots. Initial construction included a sales office and seven model homes. However, the Ponderosa II was not one of the model homes, but rather served as a marketing scheme and used (apparently once) for a January 14, 1963 open house. Potential buyers could tour a reproduction of the Ponderosa, and meet the star from *Bonanza*, Lorne Greene. Greene was also an ACCE investor and briefly owned the Ponderosa II.

While this was an interesting marketing gimmick, the documentation for this one-time event does not make the case for significance under Criterion A. However, the nomination does make the case for architectural significance under Criterion C. The Ponderosa II embodies the distinctive characteristics of a Character Ranch or Styled Ranch and is a clear example of a type of property that epitomizes the Old West and a style that was popular during the 1960s.

Please revise Section 8 dropping Criterion A and Community Planning and Development references and revise the nomination for significance under Criterion C for architecture.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Lisa Deline  
Historian, National Register of Historic Places  
[Lisa\\_Deline@nps.gov](mailto:Lisa_Deline@nps.gov)

**ARIZONA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO)  
NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION  
TRANSMITTAL FORM  
\*\*FEDERAL EXPRESS\*\***



**DATE:** May 8, 2018

**TO:**

**Joy Beasley  
National Register of Historic Places  
1849 C Street NW, Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, D.C. 20240**

**FROM:**

**William Collins  
National Register Coordinator  
State Historic Preservation Office  
1100 West Washington Street  
Phoenix AZ 85007**

**National Register Nomination Resubmittal:**

**Ponderosa II  
Mesa, Maricopa County, Arizona**

**Following discussions between Arizona SHPO Kathryn Leonard and Ms. Beasley,  
this nomination has been revised to include both Criteria A and C.**

**National Register District Amendment**

**Evergreen Historic District (Amendment)  
Mesa, Maricopa County, Arizona**

**Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at  
wcollins@azstateparks.gov or 602.542.7159.**