

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **MAY 22 1980**
DATE ENTERED **JUN 20 1980**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC **El Conquistador Water Tower**
AND/OR COMMON **"El Con"**

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER **Near the intersection of Broadway and Randolph Way** NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN **Tucson** VICINITY OF **Pima** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
STATE **Arizona** CODE **04** COUNTY **Pima** CODE **019**

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME **City of Tucson, Arizona (Department of Water and Sewers)**
STREET & NUMBER **P.O. Box 27210**
CITY, TOWN **Tucson** VICINITY OF **Arizona** STATE **85726**

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **City of Tucson, Office of Water & Sewers and/or City Clerk**
STREET & NUMBER **City Hall, 250 West Alameda Street**
CITY, TOWN **Tucson** STATE **Arizona** **85701**

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The El Conquistador Water Tower consists of a 50,000 gallon-capacity water storage tank supported by steel girders, encased in a Spanish Colonial Revival style outer shell. The structure, which assumes the form of a truncated obelisk topped by an octagonal cupola, measures 30' square at the base and stands 90' tall. The exterior walls of the tower are constructed of sheet rock applied to a steel frame which is independent of the steel girders supporting the water tank, and are finished with tannish-brown colored stuccoed plaster.

Entry to the structure is by two large double doorways, one positioned at the center of the north facade at ground level, and one occupying a similar position on the south facade. Each set of double doors is framed by a rectangular surround embellished with Baroque ornamentation centered around a cartouche. The north and south facades each contain three rectangular, multi-paned windows spaced at regular intervals in a vertical alignment, while the east and west facades contain no openings. The top of the obelisk-shaped portion of the structure is marked by a parapet. Atop the obelisk is an octagonal cupola that features four semi-circular arched windows facing east, west, north and south. Each window rests on a balconet supported by scroll-shaped brackets, projecting from the parapet of the obelisk. Each window is framed by spiral columns topped by Corinthian capitals and elaborate finials, and embellished by ornate cartouches. Interspersed between the windows are four curvilinear-arched niches.

A terra-cotta tiled roof divided into eight segments covers the cupola, and rising from the apex of the roof is a 75-pound, four-feet-tall wrought iron weather vane depicting a prospector and his burro. The weather vane was removed by the City in 1978 after high winds weakened its bearings. A few months later, community outcry persuaded the City to replace the weather vane. The original weather vane, with a new mounting created from the front axle assembly of a 1955 Buick station wagon, is now back in place atop the "El Con."

The structure has remained substantially unaltered since 1932, and is in fairly good condition.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	1928	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Josias T. Joesler (architect) John W. Murphey (builder)
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The El Conquistador Water Tower, constructed in 1928, is a rare example of the application of Spanish Colonial Revival architectural design elements to an essentially ordinary and utilitarian engineering structure. Built to serve the water supply needs of two early Tucson residential areas, the "El Con" nurtured the growth of the Colonia Solana and El Encanto subdivisions. Neighborhood residents today are returning the favor by fighting to preserve this local landmark, which provides a strong identity to the surrounding neighborhoods although it no longer supplies them with water.

Tucson's existence has always been dependent on groundwater to supply the needs of its residents and businesses; in fact, it is the largest city in the country entirely dependent on groundwater for its survival. As desert land gave way to city streets, new wells had to be drilled and water storage facilities built to accommodate the citizens' needs. The "El Con" was constructed in 1928 near the intersection of Broadway and Randolph Way to provide water for the new subdivisions of Colonia Solana and El Encanto, under development by John W. Murphey, and the now-demolished El Conquistador Hotel, a prominent early resort located to the north of Colonia Solana. Murphey was a well-known Tucson land developer, who was particularly important in the development of the area west of the University of Arizona.

In addition to its obvious function as a water tower, the "El Con" was intended as a promotional device to attract attention to the new subdivisions and to facilitate the sale of lots and homes in the area. Complaints from neighborhood residents that the water tower was an eyesore prompted Murphey to effect cosmetic improvements to the structure. As a result, prominent Tucson architect Josias T. Joesler was engaged to design an exterior shell for the structure to make it compatible with the character of the adjacent neighborhoods, which boasted many stately Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival style homes. In 1932 the structure was encased with a Spanish Colonial Revival style outer shell, creating the appearance that the "El Con" essentially presents today.

Although the "El Con" has not functioned as a water storage facility since 1944, the City of Tucson Department of Water and Sewers continued to maintain the structure and uses it for equipment storage. Occasional threats to demolish the structure, prompted by rising maintenance costs, have been met with, and thwarted by, large-scale public opposition because the community considers the "El Con" to be an important local historic and architectural landmark worthy of preservation.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Interview with Ms. Helen Murphey, December 1, 1978.

Interview with Mr. Frank Brooks, Tucson Water Department, October 17, 1979.

Interview with Mr. Gene E. Cronk, Tucson Water Department, January 4, 1979.

(See continuation sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .112 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Tucson, Arizona

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 2	5, 0, 7, 6, 8, 0	3, 5, 6, 4, 6, 8, 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Pt. Lot 36 of Subdivision Colonia Solana (Maps and Plats 5/32) beginning at a point 52.08 feet east and 52.03 feet north of the southwest corner of said Lot 36 said point being the true point of beginning; thence north 89°58'40" east 70 feet; thence north 00°01'20" west 70 feet; thence west 70 feet; thence south 70 feet to the true point of beginning

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mary Jane Gregory

ORGANIZATION

Arizona State Parks Board

DATE

May 6, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

1688 W. Adams

TELEPHONE

(602) 255-4174

CITY OR TOWN

Phoenix

STATE

Arizona 85007

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Jamesal Ayres
SHPO

TITLE

DATE

16 May 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

W. Ray Luce
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

6/20/80

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6-17-80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **MAY 22 1980**
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Interview with Mr. Lloyd Gay, May 13, 1980.

Arizona Daily Star, 2-29-29
6-20-70
10-31-75
10-5-78
10-28-78

Tucson Citizen, 10-16-75
10-31-75
1-20-76
1-27-76
5-16-78
6-16-78