

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

AUG 14 1987

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page a

RESUBMISSION PHOENIX COMMERCIAL MRA

King's Rest Hotel Motor Court
Maricopa County
ARIZONA

Summary

This property was returned for substantive reasons. The reviewer requested that the statement of significance be expanded to substantiate the importance of the resource and that a discussion of specific qualities and characteristics should be included that make this motor court an "exemplary model" of the tourist courts in Phoenix. The reviewer felt that distinguishing features should be identified which set this particular tourist court apart from other courts of the 1920's and 1930's. Finally, the reviewer stated that the nature of the alterations to cottage groupings should be addressed.

Historic Context: Tourism in Phoenix, 1920-1937

The climate and agricultural potential of Phoenix are often promoted to entice settlers. The curative nature of the desert air and the mild winters are publicized to attract the chronically ill and the wealthy winter visitor. In the 1920's, the transition to the automobile as the primary mode of travel led to the development of commercial facilities which were specifically related to the needs, services, and conveniences of the motorist. Highway connections to other communities became increasingly important.

Resorts and guest ranches developed in the desert, farmlands, and fruit orchards surrounding Phoenix. These included the San Marcos in Chandler (1913), Jokake Inn near Scottsdale (1926), the Wigwam Inn in Litchfield Park (1929), and the Arizona Biltmore (1929) in Phoenix. The San Marcos Hotel was the first exclusive resort hotel in Arizona. It was built to help attract wealthy people to the Salt River Valley area during the sunny and mild winter season. The citizens of Phoenix supported this trend with community subscription stock sales for the construction of the 16-story Hotel Westward Ho, a dominant Phoenix landmark since 1929.

The era of auto tourism and strip commercialism that took hold by the early 1920's and dominated commercial growth throughout the 1940's resulted in a shift from high-rise hotels to complexes of one-story, detached cottages and bungalows known as tourist courts. The architecture of this period is heavily influenced by the automobile in the choice of location, type of enterprise, and emphasis on parking for accessibility. In addition to tourist courts, other properties include automobile-related businesses, strip commercial groceries, single-use retail and office buildings, and mixed-use retail and office buildings.

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Strip commercial development in Phoenix generally reflected the impact of increased auto use within the city. Part of that development, however, was related to the growth of tourism nationwide that began in the early 1900's and blossomed during the 1920's as more Americans began traveling the country in their private cars. In Arizona, tourism was heavily promoted by cities to boost their economies. Sunshine and climate became valuable commodities to be advertised and sold as products of Arizona.

The tourist court (a.k.a. auto court, tourist camp) was the forerunner of today's motel. In Phoenix, such camps proliferated during the late 1920's and 1930's to accommodate winter visitors and tourists. Starting with one court in 1921, the city had only two by 1925, but boasted of 53 by 1930 and 84 by 1935. These facilities offered home-style living at reasonable prices and helped make it possible for the average working American to have a vacation away from home.

The oldest of the remaining tourist courts in Phoenix is the P. J. Shaughnessey Tourist Court, which occupied a prominent location at 15th Avenue and Grand on the road into Phoenix from Wickenburg. This collection of cottages, originally complete with grocery store, had each cabin identical to the next and all cabins lined up in rows. This court opened in 1926. The Rose Tourist Camp, begun in 1922, retains its early configuration. Its cabins are arranged in a U-shape with offices in the central area. The Rose Tourist Camp was listed on the National Register in 1985. Dick's Court at Fifteenth Avenue and Garfield was built around 1930 and features bungalow-style cabins. A later example is the Mayfair Motor Hotel (ca. 1939) which is executed in a Moderne style. Although identified during the Phoenix Commercial survey, the early tourist courts were not nominated because of compromised integrity (with the exception of the Rose Tourist Camp), and the Mayfair was not nominated because it was felt that the King's Rest Hotel Motor Court was the better of the two examples of the more recent tourist courts.

In Phoenix, tourist and automobile strip commercial businesses that once focused along Van Buren, 17th Avenue, Buckeye Road, and Grand Avenue have been impacted by the interstate freeway system that bypassed the downtown core. While the impact of the automobile and tourism on early Phoenix in the late 1920's and 1930's is still evident today, these resources are rapidly disappearing. The King's Rest Hotel Motor Court survives as an excellent representative example of this era in Phoenix.

The King's Rest Hotel Motor Court is executed in the Mediterranean style, which is a Hispanic style which is neither Mission Revival nor Spanish Colonial Revival. It contains elements of both, including white stucco walls, red tiled roofs and "Spanish" details. Its composition is often more symmetrical in the manner of an Italian Renaissance Palazzo and it contains Renaissance details. This style was typical of many early tourist courts in the Southwest which emphasized the area's Hispanic character and flavor for its romantic appeal.

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The Mediterranean style is essentially eclectic in nature, featuring a low-pitched roof, usually with little or no eave overhang and a red tile roof covering, typically with one or more prominent arches placed above door or principal window, or beneath the porch roof. The wall surface is usually stucco, and the facade normally is asymmetrical. Typical roof tiles are of two basic types: Mission tiles, which are shaped like half-cylinders, and Spanish tiles, which have an S-curve shape.

Significance

The original submission of this property emphasized its exceptional significance as an early tourist court. At the time the Phoenix Commercial Multiple Resource Area nomination was submitted in 1985, the property was less than fifty years old. Although the original submission stressed the exceptional significance of the property, it is best understood as a noteworthy representative example of the tourist court. Accordingly, the property is being resubmitted to the National Register for nomination under criterion a, as a representative example of tourist courts associated with the context "Tourism in Phoenix, 1920-1937."

Although Arizona has a wealth of tourist courts and related automobile facilities located throughout the state, very few have been formally documented. An exception is commercial automobile facilities in central Phoenix. As the result of an in-depth study of commercial architecture in Phoenix, two tourist courts were identified and considered eligible for the National Register. The Rose Tourist Court is now listed on the National Register and the King's Rest Hotel Motor Court is now being resubmitted. Although numerous early courts were identified, only these two were considered eligible. In the other cases, only portions of the original complexes remain.

The motor court has been examined in a scholarly study by Chester H. Liebs titled From Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985). Liebs describes the essential characteristics of the motor court as: "U" or "L" shape in plan, interior roads and parking, cabins located away from the road to afford privacy, an attention-getting device to lure traffic, and an office strategically located at the entrance.

The King's Rest Hotel Motor Court contains all of the characteristics identified by Liebs in his study. The cottages are oriented in a "U" shape plan with an interior oval driveway that affords parking in front of each unit. The cottages are located away from South Seventeenth Avenue (a major throughfare that connected to U. S. 85) to afford privacy for the guests. Visitors are lured to the court by the attractive Mediterranean style of the office and cottages, complete with eye-catching octagonal turrets on the cottages facing Seventeenth Avenue. The office is strategically located at the center of the "U" facing Seventeenth Avenue. The property is a good representative example of the arrangement and plan, landscaping, scale and size, vehicular access, and orientation of units that characterize a motor court.

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Integrity

The King's Rest Hotel Motor Court retains its integrity from the historic period. It was selected as one of only two tourist courts to be nominated as part of the Phoenix Commercial MRA because it is the most intact and elaborate of the early tourist courts in the survey area. This degree of integrity formed the basis for the original nomination to single out the property as possessing exceptional significance. Its degree of integrity is extremely high. Its use has been changed to residential care for the elderly and infirm, but this change has not resulted in the alteration of any of the units or the overall plan of the court.

Accompanying Documentation

This resubmission provides a clarification of the area of significance for this property only. It does not change the boundary of the nominated property, which is described as the boundary of Maricopa County Tax Assessor's Parcel number 112-14-1. This area contains approximately 1.1564 acres. UTM coordinates and a sketch map are included on the form. A topographic map showing the location of the property was sent with the original nomination and is retained in the National Register files. Although the photographs sent with this resubmission are more than two years old, the property has not changed appearance since the photos were taken. The photographs accurately depict the present condition of the property.

Bibliography

Laird, Linda, & Associates. City of Chandler Historic and Architectural Survey Final Report. Tucson: 1984.

Chester H. Liebs. From Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 1984.

Page, Charles Hall, & Associates, Inc. Phoenix Historic Building Survey. 1979.

Prepared By: Glenda Skarphol, Preservation Intern, Arizona SHPO

Edited by Roger Brevoort (Architectural Historian) and
Doug Kupel (Historian), Arizona SHPO

ARIZONA STATE HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

SURVEY AREA NAME: Phoenix Commercial
 HISTORIC NAME: King's Rest Hotel Motor Court
 ADDRESS/LOCATION: 801 S. 17th Avenue
 CITY/TOWN: Phoenix
 TAX PARCEL NUMBER: 112/14/1 - 1.1564 acres
 OWNER: Elmer & Clover Sands
 OWNER ADDRESS: 1532 W. Flower Circle South
Phoenix, AZ 85015
 HISTORIC USE: Motor Hotel
 PRESENT USE: Rest Home
 BUILDING TYPE: Commercial/
 STYLE: Period Revival-Mediterranean
 CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1937
 ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown
 INTEGRITY: original site/unaltered
 CONDITION: good/maintained

COUNTY: Maricopa SURVEY SITE: 63-8
 USGS QUAD: Phoenix
 T 1N R 3E S 18 N 1/2 1/4 OF THE 1/4
 UTM Zone 12 Easting 398240 Northing 3700330

Description (contd.)

ROOF TYPE: gabled
 ROOF SHEATHING: mission tile
 EAVES TREATMENT: open
 WINDOWS: variance/10 light steel casement
 ENTRY: n/a
 PORCHES: awning over doors
 STOREFRONTS: n/a

DESCRIPTION

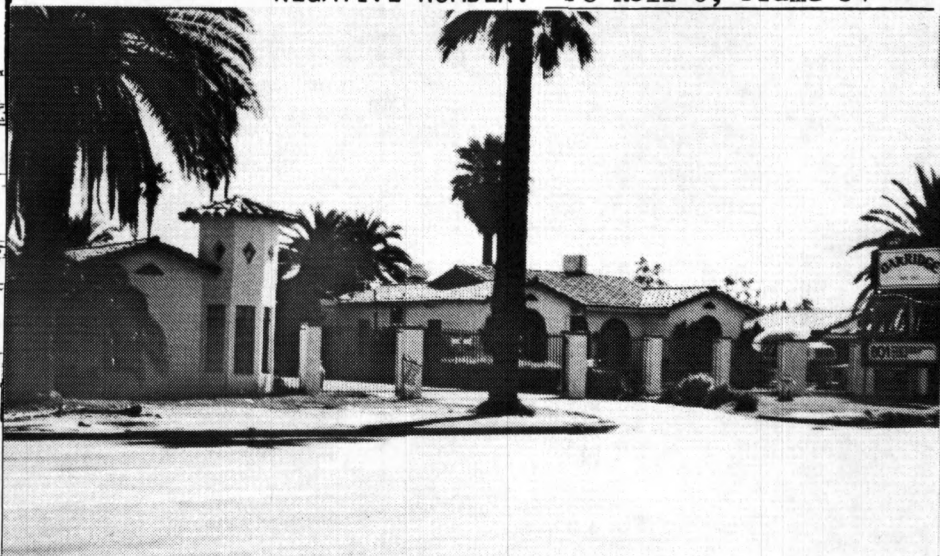
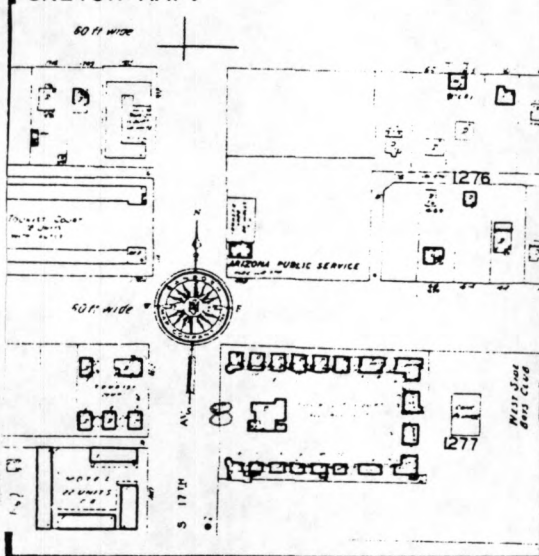
STORIES: 1 DIMENSIONS: multiple cabins
(l)180 (w)280
 STRUCTURAL MATERIAL: brick
 FOUNDATION MATERIAL: concrete
 WALL SHEATHING: stucco
 APPLIED ORNAMENT: mission tile roofs, octagonal
turrets, steel casement windows

NOTABLE INTERIOR: _____
 OUTBUILDINGS: _____
 ALTERATIONS: unaltered

PHOTOGRAPH

PHOTOGRAPHER: Francissen
 DATE: August 1983 VIEW: SE
 NEGATIVE NUMBER: PC Roll 6, Frame 34

SKETCH MAP:



ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION/ANALYSIS (annotated form):

SIGNIFICANCE:

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: COMMERCE___ COMMUNITY PLANNING___ ECONOMICS___
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT___ GOVERNMENTAL___ MILITARY___ RELIGION___ SCIENCE___
THEATRE___ TRANSPORTATION___ TOURISM X OTHER(specify)___

HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS (be concise):

PROMINENT OCCUPANT/HISTORIC ASSOCIATION(S) Built as tourist court Motor Hotel in 1937.

RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT Reflects the importance of tourism in Phoenix in the 1930s.

CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS Good example of Spanish Colonial Revival design.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE _____

MAJOR ARCH. FORM/MATERIAL _____

ENGINEERING/STRUCTURAL _____

DISTRICT/STREETSCAPE CONTRIBUTION Contributes to residential scale of neighborhood.

DISCUSSION AS REQUIRED:

Best example of Tourist Court in the survey area.

See MRA text, Item 8, pages 43,80.

CONTEXT: ISOLATED/RURAL___ RESIDENTIAL STREET___ COMMERCIAL X CENTRAL SQUARE___
CBD:___ OTHER: Strip

BIBLIOGRAPHY/SOURCES:

Sanborn Maps
Phoenix Directory

LISTING IN OTHER SURVEYS: _____

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS:

LISTED___ DETERMINED ELIGIBLE___ DETERMINED NOT ELIGIBLE___ NOT EVALUATED___

COMMENTS/DEVELOPMENT PLANS/THREATS:

SURVEYOR J. Garrison et al SURVEY DATE May 1984 DATE FORM COMPLETED May 1984