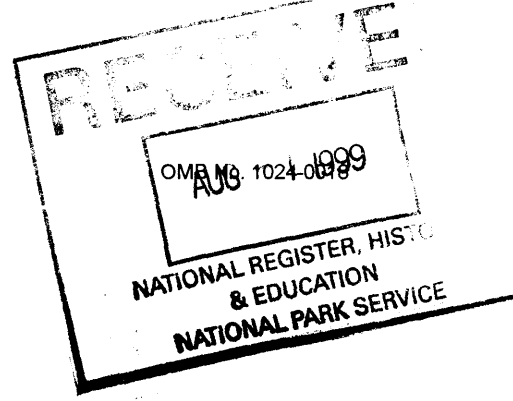


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: **George Ellis Residence**

other names/site number: **None**

2. Location

street & number: **105 Cattle Track**

not for publication: **_N/A_**

city or town: **Scottsdale**

vicinity: **_N/A_**

state: **Arizona** code: **AZ** county: **Maricopa**

code: **013** zip code: **85250**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James W. Gowen, ASBAP
Signature of certifying official

27 JULY 1999
Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====

4. National Park Service Certification

=====

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

Edson H. Beall 9/3/99

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

=====

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
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing: "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis"

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category:	DOMESTIC	Subcategory:	Single dwelling & secondary buildings
	COMMERCE		Professional (artists' studios)
	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE		Agricultural outbuildings

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category:	DOMESTIC	Subcategory:	Single dwelling & secondary buildings
	COMMERCE		Professional (artists' studios)

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Category:	MODERN MOVEMENT	Subcategory:	None
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Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation:	CONCRETE
roof:	WOOD; OTHER
walls:	WOOD (walls of main building); ADOBE (walls of secondary building)
other:	N/A

Narrative Description (*SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS 6-8*)

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8. Statement of Significance

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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 (applies to Buildings 2 and 3)
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1937-1948

Significant Dates

1937 (Original construction date of residence)

1940s (Period during which residence was continually expanded)

Significant Person

Ellis, George Lewis

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ellis, George Lewis

Narrative Statement of Significance (*SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS 9-10*)

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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Bibliography (*SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 11*)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of Repository: Ellis family, 105 Cattle Track, Scottsdale, Arizona 85250

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 8.4

UTM References (See accompanying USGS map for point references)
Zone 12 414950E 3709720N

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary description corresponds to the legal boundary of parcel #174-13-004F, located in the SW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 11, Township 2 North, Range 4 East, Gila & Salt River Meridian, in Maricopa County, Arizona.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the main building and associated outbuildings that historically comprised the George Ellis residence. Included within the boundary are the Ellis house, three studio/workshops, and two small rental-residential units. The residence, one of the studio/workshops, and one of the rental-residential units meet the registration requirements outlined in the multiple property documentation entitled "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis.". Two of the studio/workshops and the third rental-residential unit do not meet those requirements.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title: **Pat Haigh Stein**
organization: **Arizona Preservation Consultants** date: **December 1998**
street/number: **6786 Mariah Drive** telephone: **(520) 714-0585**
city or town: **Flagstaff** state: **AZ** zip code: **86004**

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Additional Documentation
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Continuation Sheets (pages 6-12)

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location (Figure 1).

A sketch map indicating property boundary, plus contributing and noncontributing buildings (Figure 2).

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property (Photos 1 through 4).

Additional items N/A

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Property Owner
=====

name: **"Canal at Cattle Track" c/o Janie Ellis**
street & number: **105 Cattle Track** telephone: **(602) 948-5670**
city or town: **Scottsdale** state: **Arizona** zip code: **85250**

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 6 George Ellis Residence
Maricopa County, Arizona
Multiple property listing: "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis"

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DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The George Ellis residence is a family compound consisting of one main building and five ancillary ones. The main building is the Ellis house, begun in 1937 and substantially expanded in the 1940s. Outbuildings on the property consist of three workshop-studios and two rental-residential units. The Ellis house, one of the studio/workshops, and one of the rental-residential units meet the registration requirements for the property type "residential property" as defined in the MPDF entitled "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis." The other three buildings do not meet those requirements and are not eligible for the National Register.

Location and Setting

The George Ellis residence in Scottsdale, Arizona, is located on the west bank of the Arizona Canal approximately between Lincoln and MacDonald drives. It is an 8.4-acre property described as Tax Parcel #174-13-004F in Maricopa County records. The relatively flat parcel is bounded on the north by a private home, on the east by the canal, on the south by property consisting of an artist's gallery and studio, and on the west by Cattle Track. Situated at an elevation of 1280 ft, the land lies within the Sonoran Desert. Vegetation on the property is predominantly native creosotebush, but desert riparian species such as paloverde and mesquite also occur. The property is only about two miles from the center of urban Scottsdale but retains a rural setting; its buildings are so deeply set back from Cattle Track that they are barely visible from that road, while the road itself lacks curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and street lights.

Description

Building 1 (eligible): The main building on the property, the Ellis house, is a one-story redwood home with a zoned plan: a zone of family bedrooms and bathrooms at the northern end of the house is separated from a zone of daytime kitchen/living rooms at the southern end by means of a central, roofed, and screened breezeway. From the air, the house has the appearance of two broad roomblocks connected by a more slender strap of breezeway. For that reason, Ellis used the term "saddlebags" to describe the arrangement of floor space.

The house evolved from a one-room cottage Ellis constructed in 1937 using redwood staves salvaged from the Phoenix-Verde River pipeline. The cottage had one room, a thatched-roof porch, and a metal coyote sculpture at the gable end above a screened door. Ellis left the staves in a rough-hewn state, bearing the marks of the metal bands that had held the pipeline together. When Ellis expanded the cottage beginning in the late 1930s and continuing into the late 1940s -- the period in which the building acquired its "saddlebags" configuration -- the original room was preserved as the core of the southern roomblock. Its rough-hewn walls with metal band marks are still visible inside the house today.

The Ellis house features a low-pitched roof, eaves with wide overhangs, glazing shaped to its various gable ends, strings of horizontally-sliding wooden windows, redwood built-ins and other cabinetry, hand-made (forged and wrought-iron) hardware, four corner and cantilevered fireplaces (two in the southern roomblock, one in the central breezeway, and one

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 7 George Ellis Residence
Maricopa County, Arizona
Multiple property listing: "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis"

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in the northern roomblock), red concrete floors with integral red concrete baseboards, and hand-made chevron-shaped recessed lighting above the wall plates. All of the redwood cabinetry bears an Ellis trademark: a single lath handle, running the full length or width of the cabinet and beveled 30 degrees on one side to accommodate the fingers. Many of the interior doorways have a height of only 6 ft. Some rooms have ceiling heights of only 6' 7". Other rooms are open clear to the roof rafters. All of these features are original and as Ellis designed and built them. In the case of the doors and ceilings, the unusually low ones were intended to funnel breezes, while the higher ones were designed to collect heat above and away from residents occupying the spaces below. The scheme worked well for climate control but eventually proved to be the bane of George's two '6' 4" sons.

Building 2 (eligible): This moved building meets the registration requirements of the MPDF. The cottage was designed and constructed by Ellis in 1942 for the Hipps family. Its original location was approximately 1/3-mile northwest of the Ellis home, within the Cattle Track neighborhood. When modern construction threatened the building, the Ellis family in 1970 moved it to its present location, immediately south of their own home. It is now used as a rehearsal and performance space, guest quarters, and community meeting place.

The building is a good example of a George Ellis residence. It is a one-story, unplastered adobe building with a low-pitched roof and wide eaves. A full-length porch extends along the west elevation. A concrete skirt has been placed around the bottom courses of exterior adobes to prevent basal erosion. The house also features glazing fitted to the gable ends, rooms open to the roof rafters, the extensive use of redwood for trim and Ellis-style cabinetry, and a massive adobe cantilevered fireplace. A particularly notable feature is the front door. Made of rough-hewn redwood, it still bears the marks of metal bands from the Phoenix-Verde River pipeline.

Building 3 (eligible): This building was originally constructed in the late 1930s as a barn on the Ellis property. Circa 1944-1945 Ellis moved it a short distance north of his house and converted it into a rental unit. Artist Philip Curtis moved into the building in the late 1940s and has rented it as his studio-residence since that time. In this little building, Curtis built a luminous and long career as a painter.

Ellis customized the building for Curtis. At one end he added a small artist's studio and storage room; the studio featured a large, north-facing window slanting inward at the top to cut glare. At the opposite end, Ellis built a special room in which Curtis, a victim of rheumatoid arthritis, could take therapeutic baths. These changes gave the building a zoned plan, with private quarters at the east end, a kitchen-living area in its center, and an artist's studio and storage room at its west end. The long, low, one-story structure has a low-pitched roof, wide eave overhangs, extensive redwood trim, Ellis-style cabinetry, wrought-iron hardware, strings of horizontally-sliding wooden windows, open-beamed rooms, and a 78"-high plate line with concealed indirect lighting. Particularly notable are the interior doorways, some of which measure only 16 and 19 inches wide, so that one has to turn sideways to pass through them.

Building 4 (ineligible): This small rental-residential unit, located southeast of the Curtis rental and northeast of the Ellis house, was designed not by Ellis but rather by architect Blaine Drake. It was originally located outside the Cattle Track neighborhood. Ellis thought highly enough of the pre-fabricated, perlite-walled house to move it onto his own property to save it from 1960s demolition.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 8 George Ellis Residence
Maricopa County, Arizona
Multiple property listing: "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis"

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Building 5 (ineligible): Situated west of the Ellis house, this early 1970s building is a studio. It is called the "Pool Hall" because the Ellis family pool (built circa 1947) lies in its basement.

Building 6 (ineligible): The "shop" evolved from several agricultural sheds built in the late 1930s. It is a rambling series of interconnected artists' workshops and studios that continues to be modified and reconfigured to suit its tenants. It is located east and southeast of Building 2.

Integrity

The overall integrity of the property as an expression of Ellis' work is good. The main building (Building 1) is a fine example of the Ellis style of residential architecture. Building 2 is a good example both of his style and of his proficiency in adobe. Building 3, the Curtis rental, is interesting for the way in which it shows how Ellis applied his sense of design to change an agricultural building into an artist's residence-studio. The three buildings possess the requisite integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and setting to render them eligible under the MPDF.

Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Contributing and non-contributing buildings are indicated on Figure 2. Buildings 1, 2, and 3 meet the registration requirements of the MPDF entitled "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis." Buildings 4, 5, and 6 do not meet those requirements. Building 4 was not designed by Ellis. Building 5 is of modern construction, while Building 6 has experienced modern alteration to the point that it has lost much of its historic integrity.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 9 George Ellis Residence
 Maricopa County, Arizona
 Multiple property listing: "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis"

SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The property is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as a strong expression of the residential architecture of George Ellis. The property exemplifies Ellis' organic approach to design in its siting and use of local materials. The main building and two of the ancillary ones exhibit character-defining traits of the Ellis style. The property also has significance under Criterion B as the historic resource most strongly associated with Ellis, who resided there from the mid 1930s until his death in 1971. The period of significance extends from 1937 to 1948, indicating the main construction period for the three eligible buildings. The suggested level of significance is local. In time, the property will also likely be eligible for its association with artist Philip Curtis; Curtis gained international acclaim after moving to the property in the late 1940s.

Significance under Criterion B

The property is eligible under Criterion B because it is the historic resource most strongly associated with the productive career of designer-builder George Lewis Ellis (1907-1971). Ellis lived there and used it as the base of his construction business and other entrepreneurial interests from the time he purchased the land in 1937 until his death in 1971. He was associated with the property during all the years that he actively engaged in home construction, from 1937 to about 1955, and was never absent for any substantial period, not even during wartime. While residing and working at the property, Ellis developed a style and approach to home-building that was distinctly his own (as detailed in the MPDF accompanying this nomination). With his wife and neighbors, Ellis also played a significant role in shaping his Cattle Track neighborhood into Scottsdale's historic arts community. The City of Scottsdale officially recognizes Ellis' achievements as a designer and community-builder, and in 1995 inducted him into its Hall of Fame.

The property is not yet eligible for its association with artist Philip Curtis, but likely will be so in due course; therefore, the following information is provided. Curtis was born and raised in Jackson, Michigan, attended Albion College and the Yale School of Fine Arts, and in the 1930s landed a job with the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project based in New York. The purpose of the "project," as it was called, was to extend big-city culture to people and places that had never seen it. In his capacity with the "project," Curtis in 1937 opened an art center in Arizona that would evolve into the Phoenix Art Museum. Working with a handful of other artists, he assembled a series of eye-opening exhibits for Arizonans, designed the interior of at least one building at Arizona State University, and sponsored art classes on a host of topics (violin-making to basket-weaving). Curtis left Phoenix in the early and mid 1940s to build another federal art center in Des Moines, attend Harvard briefly, and serve in Washington during the war years. His health failing, he returned to Arizona in the late 1940s and rented a small house (Building 3 in this nomination) in which to pursue his interest in painting. His big break came in 1960 when Sandra Kempner, Lewis Ruskin, and other notable Phoenixians formed a trust to support Curtis for three years. With income assured, Curtis entered a new period of productivity. By 1964 he was exhibiting in New York and gaining notice abroad. Now considered "the dean of Arizona artists," Phil Curtis still lives in and paints from the same Cattle Track building he has rented from the Ellis family since 1948-1949.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 10 George Ellis Residence
Maricopa County, Arizona
Multiple property listing: "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis"

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Significance under Criterion C

The property is eligible under Criterion C as a strong expression of the residential architecture of George Ellis. It provides examples of his proficiency in wood and adobe construction. It contains living areas and work areas reflecting Ellis' belief that a proper home should include ample space for creative endeavors. The property embodies Ellis' organic approach to design because it uses the environment to provide natural climate control, enhances the beauty of the surrounding desert, and incorporates local (including recycled) materials. Moreover, the three eligible buildings on the property (Buildings 1, 2, and 3) variously possess traits distinctive of the Ellis style. They have clean, simple lines, with walls requiring no plaster or other finishing. They incorporate the extensive use of redwood, in a rough-hewn or finished state, for exterior and interior trim; indeed, the Ellis house (Building 1) is almost entirely of redwood. The three buildings have single-story designs, strong horizontal lines, extremely low-pitched roofs with wide eave overhangs, zoning of interior space, and glazing shaped to gable ends. Their interiors also exhibit various Ellis trademarks such as red-colored concrete floors (some with integral concrete baseboards); rooms with low ceilings as well as rooms open clear to the roof rafters; corner and cantilevered fireplaces; strings of wooden, horizontally-sliding windows as well as corner windows; low, narrow interior doorways; and Ellis-style cabinetry (with beveled lath handles). The main nominated resource (Building 1) is a fine example of Ellis' style and his proficiency in wood construction. Building 2 is a good example both of his style and of his proficiency in adobe construction. And Building 3, the Curtis rental, is eligible for the way in which it shows how Ellis applied his design sense to change an agricultural building into a residence-studio. Under the associated MPDF, the three buildings possess the requisite integrity of materials, design, workmanship, and setting to render them eligible for the National Register.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 11 George Ellis Residence
Maricopa County, Arizona
Multiple property listing: "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis"

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- 1998 Untitled manuscript regarding the history of Cattle Track in Scottsdale. Edited by Janie Ellis. On file, Ellis family (private collection), Scottsdale.

Lebow, Edward

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McElfresh, Patricia Myers, and Lois McFarland

- 1984 *Scottsdale: Jewel in the Desert*. Windsor Publications, Woodland Hills, California.

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- nd Cattle Track's Fascinating Legacy: Among other Things, They Built a Winning Indy Car Here. *Scottsdale Tribune*, date unknown. Copy on file, Ellis family (private collection), Scottsdale.

Whitney, Herb

- 1995 12 Chosen for Scottsdale Hall of Fame. *The Arizona Republic/The Phoenix Gazette*, April 21, 1995:3.

Zachry, Tiffany

- 1993 Artist Sticks to Living in Barn Despite Winning Fame, Fortune. *The Arizona Republic/The Phoenix Gazette*, February 19, 1993:5N1.

Interview

- Rachael and Janie Ellis, widow and daughter of George Ellis. Interviews conducted from October 26-28, 1998, Cattle Track Neighborhood, Scottsdale, Arizona.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section _Photos_ Page _12_ George Ellis Residence
Maricopa County, Arizona
Multiple property listing: "Residential Properties Designed by George Ellis"

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Photographic Information

The following information applies to Photos 1 through 4.

1. George Ellis Residence
 2. Maricopa County, AZ
 3. P. Stein
 4. October 1998
 5. Arizona Preservation Consultants, Flagstaff, AZ
-
6. View northeast, showing main house (Building 1) shaded by paloverde trees
 7. Photo 1

 6. View east, showing detail of entry to Building 2. Note metal band marks on redwood door, adobe wall construction, and glazing under gable end
 7. Photo 2

 6. View southeast, showing main elevation of Building 2
 7. Photo 3

 6. View north, showing entry and main elevation of Building 3, the Curtis rental-residence.
 7. Photo 4

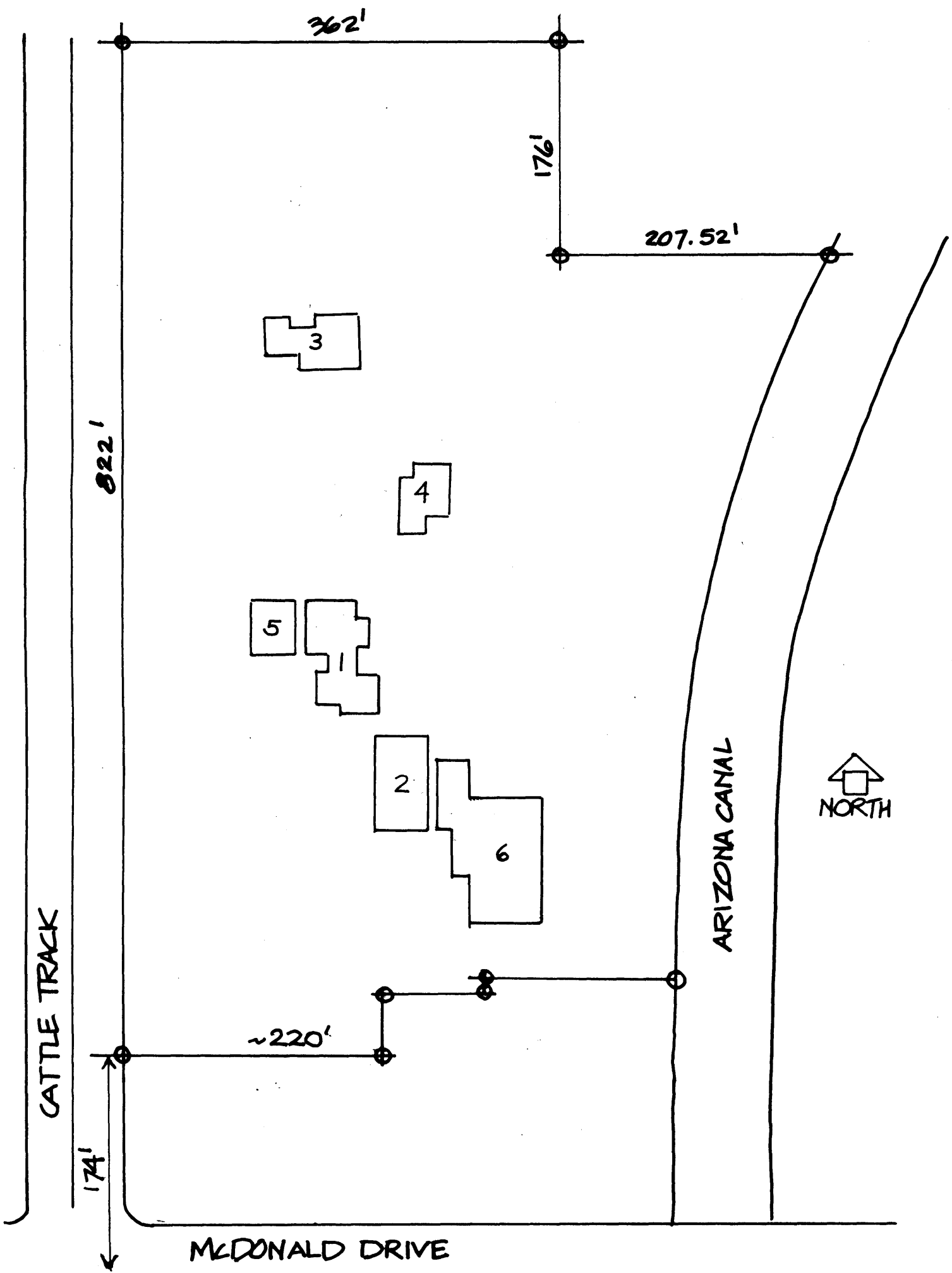


FIGURE 2
GEORGE ELLIS RESIDENCE
MARICOPA COUNTY, AZ
SCALE: 1" = 100'
ELIGIBLE: BLDGS 1,2,3 INELIGIBLE: BLDGS 4,5,6