

ARIZONA STATE HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY

HISTORIC PROPERTY NAME Shonessy Building/Don Chun Wo Store		
COMMON PROPERTY NAME second-hand store		
PROPERTY LOCATION-STREET & NO. 121 West Main Avenue		
CITY, TOWN/VICINITY OF Casa Grande	ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 507-07-242	
OWNER OF PROPERTY Blanche Kennedy	PHONE	
STREET & NO./P.O. BOX 1100 East Nevada Street		
CITY, TOWN El Paso,	STATE Texas	ZIP
FORM PREPARED BY Janus Associates Inc.	DATE 9/82	
STREET & NO./P.O. BOX 2121 South Priest Suite 127	PHONE 967-7117	
CITY, TOWN Tempe,	STATE Arizona	ZIP 85282
PHOTO BY Janus Associates Inc.	DATE Feb. 1982	
VIEW looking southeast		
HISTORIC USE commercial		
PRESENT USE vacant	ACREAGE less/one	
ARCHITECT/BUILDER		
CONSTRUCTION/MODIFICATION DATES Built 1913		

COUNTY Pinal County	INVENTORY NO. CG-107
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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Shonessy Building/Don Chun Wo Store is a two-story rectangular (24' x 60') commercial building built of cast-in-place concrete, with a flat roof and a parapet across both the front and rear facades. The central double-door entry is flanked by two rectangular windows; two windows in the second story are directly above those in the first story. A canopy along the front facade overhangs the first floor entry. Wooden stairs on the east side of the building lead to a second story single-leaf door. The west side has a first story single-leaf door. A central double-door is in the rear (south) facade with windows located the same as main facade windows. Windows on the east and west facades are discretely placed rectangular openings with double-hung sash. Although the building is in deteriorating condition, original features are present, such as pressed tin ceilings on both stories.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE/HISTORY

The Shonessy Building/Don Chun Wo Store is significant for its method of construction, its association with two of Casa Grande's well-known businessmen, and its role in the early development of business in Casa Grande.

Built in 1913 by William Shonessy, businessman in Casa Grande, the building was probably the first two-story reinforced cast-in-place concrete commercial building in Casa Grande. The building has not been modified and has high integrity despite its deteriorated condition. Original intact features include pressed tin ceilings, woodwork, and floors.

After construction, the lower floor was leased as a store and the upper floor leased to Dr. Edward J. Gungle, one of Casa Grande's first doctors; John F. Edwards, a dentist; Burgess' Real Estate Offices; Woods and Wyatt Realty Offices; and the Casa Grande Board of Trade. The first bank in Casa Grande, the Casa Grande Valley Bank, opened here in 1914.

In 1927, Don Chun Wo, a Chinese merchant from Tucson, opened a grocery store on the first floor; the second being rented as apartments which he managed. While a grocer in Tucson, Mr. Don started the Chinese Free Masons, acted as court interpreter for the Chinese-speaking population; was "mayor" of the Chinese section, and was a member of the Chamber of Commerce. In Casa Grande, he earned a reputation for generosity for extending credit to his customers. He spoke Papago, Pima, Spanish, Chinese, and English. Mr. Don retired in 1943, after which the building became a second-hand store.

SOURCES OF ABOVE INFORMATION/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Casa Grande Valley Historical Society newspaper index file
Casa Grande Valley Historical Society history and photo file
Interviews: Merilyn Don 1977
Don Chun Wo 1927, 1940
Jerry and Merilyn Don 8/2/82

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA/LEGAL DESCRIPTION/VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

W. 89' x 177', Block 43, Casa Grande Townsite
USGS QUAD - CASA GRANDE WEST
UTM references on continuation sheet

GENERAL COMMENTS/FUTURE PLANS FOR PROPERTY