

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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MacTavish House (#137) - Magdalena, NM

Description

The MacTavish House, on the west side of <sup>Elm</sup> Oak between Third and Fourth, is one of two examples of Queen Anne Style in Magdalena. The house is two stories and constructed of wood frame set on a stone foundation. The roof is a complex hip broken by a corner tower, projecting gable wings, and elaborate brick chimneys. The polygonal tower is three stories topped by a conical roof. The windows are all wood double hung and the first floor front windows and top tower windows have leaded glass patterns. At one side there is a bay window and the dining room has some stained glass windows. Across the front of the porch is a two-story veranda with Doric columns, spindle-post balustrade, and denticulated cornice. Originally the house had clapboard siding painted a light color and details were highlighted with a darker color.

In recent years the exterior has been altered somewhat. About twenty years ago the exterior was covered with aluminum siding. More recently the verandas have been enclosed with wood and glass, though the columns and denticulation remain intact. The remaining exterior features are unchanged. The interior also retains many of the original features, including pressed metal ceilings, fireplace, and lighting fixtures.

Significance

The MacTavish House is significant as the largest, most elaborate house in Magdalena. It is a good example of the Queen Anne Style. The only other example of the style in Magdalena has been severely remodeled. In addition, the ca. 1915 house was built by J.S. MacTavish, one of the town's most prominent businessmen.

The MacTavish House first appears on the 1919 Sanborn Map indicating a construction date of between 1913 and 1919. The house was built during Magdalena's wealthiest years and is the only really large, elaborate house in town. Despite the exterior alterations, it is a good example of the Queen Anne Style and is the only house which testifies to the previous wealth of Magdalena.

J.S. MacTavish was born in Scotland in 1867 and came to the U.S. some twenty years later. He arrived in Magdalena within a few years of the town's founding. He first worked for Becker-Blackwell, a statewide general merchandise business. Within a few years, he was a partner in Becker-MacTavish. This general merchandise firm was by far the largest in Magdalena with its main store on the west side of Main north of First, and corrals, lumber yards and such occupied a large area along the railroad tracks. The firm remained in business at least through the 1930's. MacTavish died in 1947. Within the last 30 years, the west side of Main suffered a fire and the MacTavish store was destroyed along with the other buildings. Thus the house remains the only structure associated with one of Magdalena's most successful businessmen.

Owner: C.V. and Inez Harris  
Box 344  
Magdalena, New Mexico 87825

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a fence which marks the northeast corner of the property, proceed west along the fence for approximately 30 meters to the alley; proceed south along the east edge of the alley for approximately 18 meters to a fence paralleling the south side of the house; proceed east along the fence for approximately 30 meters to Elm; proceed north along the west edge of Elm for approximately 18 meters to the starting point.

UTM Reference: 13/293050/3776900