

WINTERHAVEN NEIGHBORHOOD

Bounded by Ft. Lowell Road to the south, Prince Road to the north,
Tucson Boulevard on the west, and Country Club Road on the east.

Tucson

Pima County

Arizona

HALS AZ-25

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

1849 C Street NW

Washington, DC 20240

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WINTERHAVEN NEIGHBORHOOD

HALS NO. AZ-25

Location: Bounded by Ft. Lowell Road to the south, Prince Road to the north, Tucson Boulevard on the west, and Country Club Road on the east. Tucson, Pima County, Arizona.

32.268922, -110.931565 (Intersection of N. Christmas Avenue and E. Kleindale Road, Google Earth, WGS84)

Significance: The neighborhood of Winterhaven is significant as a reflection of prominent economic and social values of the mid-20th century. Built in 1949, this planned subdivision features distinct, nonnative landscaping, and modern ranch architecture reminiscent of the Midwest to attract those residents to life in Arizona. During the time of its construction, Arizona was experiencing an exponential growth in population, expanding at a rate second only to California. While most metropolitan areas within the state were affected by this growth, Tucson's population alone grew by 368%. Due to this rapid increase, the city commenced efforts to expand Tucson's boundaries. However, at the same time many developers were purposefully building outside of the municipality to take advantage of a lack of regulatory oversight. Between 1945 and 1952, it is estimated that 125 of these subdivisions were built, with many lacking necessary infrastructure. Compared to these subpar subdivisions, Winterhaven was conceptualized with both a range of amenities and services meant to provide its residents with a comfortable life.

The subdivision's layout was designed by Tony Blanton and C.B. Richards and included elements such as wide, tree-lined roads, lots meant for single-family residences, and a private water system. In addition to lauding modern amenities desirable to the booming middle-class, Winterhaven's design was meant to promote a sense of community in a new suburban development. Aspects of this plan can be seen in elements of the landscape. Large, green, contiguous front lawns with mailboxes located at the front edge of properties all encourage use and interaction between neighbors. Additional aspects such as tree lined, shaded streets, and traffic control give the neighborhood its park-like atmosphere. The construction and continued use of private wells have enabled the community to maintain its distinctive, lush landscapes, sometimes to the chagrin of more water conscious neighbors. Thanks to the continued work of the Winterhaven Water and Development Company's Board of Directors, much of the original Midwest-style and sense of community essential to the significance of this neighborhood has been maintained. Due to its sustained character, Winterhaven was designated as a National Register of Historic Places historic district in 2005.

Description: The Winterhaven neighborhood is in a residential area of central Tucson. It is self-contained with limited points of entry at E Kleindale Road, N Treat Avenue, and N Christmas Avenue. At the main entrance on the intersection of E Fort Lowell and N Christmas, there is a landscaped sign area noting the beginning of the neighborhood (Figure 2). As Winterhaven is located within a larger residential area, there are several neighborhoods that share boundaries with this Historic District. However, Winterhaven has remained distinctive by design.

Street Pattern

The street pattern within the neighborhood follows a post-war curvilinear layout. There are cul-de-sacs and T-intersections to emphasize this design (Figure 8). Roll top curbs separate the street from front lawns (Figure 4). The roads are wide and lined with established trees (Figures 3 and 7). This, in combination with a lack of sidewalks and bike lanes, created long vistas unique to the Tucson area. Additional features such as streetlights, were lauded as attractive amenities of the new suburban lifestyle and were included in the “Winterhaven Subdivision Pamphlet” distributed by Canyon State Land Company. In the neighborhood, there is significant bicycle and automobile traffic. While it is possible to walk through the neighborhood, pedestrian use is not as prevalent as automobile use. Bike lanes and sidewalks were not included in most areas of the neighborhood in the original design. Instead, elements of Winterhaven’s street pattern were designed around automobile usage. The roads intentionally slow traffic. Street signs are located at each intersection directing traffic. The street pattern also functions as a demarcation of the neighborhood’s boundaries and center. All roads except for North Treat Avenue end once they meet one of the four major streets that serve as the neighborhood’s borders. North Treat Avenue crosses East Prince Road on the northern side of Winterhaven, at which point it is renamed North Cactus Boulevard. On the opposite side, North Treat Avenue is non-contiguous, ending within the subdivision and beginning again under the same name running south of Fort Lowell Road. At the junction where Kleindale Road turns into Christmas Avenue there is a large planter with an Aleppo pine and landscaped area, which functions as a central point in Winterhaven.

Architecture

The residential architecture are examples of mid-century ranch style homes. The homes are uniformly set back from the road with large, grassy front lawns. A majority of the properties include a paved driveway, which runs perpendicular to the road and leads to a carport. Masonry walls are standard in Winterhaven, with materials such as burnt adobe, red brick, and painted brick commonly used. Roofs consist of asphalt tiles or built-up polymer coating. The residences feature a variety of window types. Outdoor lighting is required to be shielded downward or kept to a maximum of 75-watts, per the community’s design guidelines, with exceptions being made for the annual Festival of Lights. Many of the residents participate in the Festival by decorating their houses and lawns for the holidays

with strings of bright, multi-colored lights. This event draws Tucsonans throughout the season and adds to the neighborhood cohesiveness.

Landscape Features

The overall impression is that of a lush nonnative landscape, with large Aleppo pine street trees and wide swaths of green lawn space in front of each residence. The lawns, which extend out into the street, are bordered on one side by gravel or paved driveways that lead to the respective carports (Figure 6). There are an additional number of other non-native trees and shrubs (Figure 5). The front lawns are contiguous and run into each other. This connection helps to create significant green space within the neighborhood. There are some residents who have chosen to include native, desert landscaping and integrate it with the existing green areas.

There is an in-ground watering system with sprinklers incorporated in each lawn and shared space. Water usage in Winterhaven is supported by three wells and the neighborhood is not connected to the city of Tucson's supply system (Figure 10). The three well sites are distributed throughout the neighborhood; one on Fort Lowell, another just off Country Club, and one located just west of Forgeus. Each of the wells is surrounded by chain-link fencing and are not publicly accessible as well as being positioned so that they are not visible from the interior of the neighborhood. These wells allow for contained use of water within the neighborhood. It has given Winterhaven freedom to sustain the non-native landscaping. Public property related to this includes fire hydrants. The wells are located on the edges of the neighborhood in different areas.

Additional small-scale features include street name signs, street signs with pine trees, and mailboxes located on the street in front of each property. Many of the street names are Christmas-themed, such as North Christmas Avenue and North Treat Circle, alluding to the Festival of Lights event that happens at the end of the year in the neighborhood. Each street name sign is green with the same white font seen on signage in the surrounding Tucson neighborhoods. Due to the tall, established trees running along each street, the landscaping in combination with the streets have created vistas of the Santa Catalina Mountains (Figure 9).

History: Construction on the neighborhood of Winterhaven began in 1949. From the beginning, developers C.B. Richards and Tony Blanton had a clear vision as to what they wanted their new subdivision to represent. Inspired by the Midwest, the architecture, layout, and landscape were designed in tandem to create a community surrounded by non-native greenery and modern amenities. Richards was also clear in his wish that the character of his subdivision be maintained. On the first of February 1949, the Winterhaven Water and Development Company, Inc., along with a series of covenants, conditions, and restrictions it was governed to uphold, was established.

Today, much of the significance and character of the neighborhood has been preserved due to the actions of the Winterhaven Water and Development Company and its Board of Directors. Acting as a neighborhood association, the Board has continued to update the original guidelines for residents in order to maintain what makes the neighborhood unique, cohesive, and significant. Any proposed changes, to either the architecture or landscape, that could affect a property's significance must be approved by this Board. Due to these efforts, Winterhaven was declared a historic district in 2005, adding to the protective preservation measures currently in place.

Landscape

The Winterhaven neighborhood is characterized by its cohesive use of green lawns and nonnative plant material in its landscape. The neighborhood's developer, C.B. Richards, wanted to emulate a typical Midwestern environment, one with expansive swaths of lawn and large shade trees. This type of landscape can be seen in the Shaker Heights community near Cleveland, Ohio, a neighborhood from which Richards drew inspiration. Another influence came from the Garden City movement, a 19th century urban planning model that designed self-contained communities surrounded by greenbelts. This overarching concept, implemented in Winterhaven in 1949, underscored the neighborhood's uniqueness compared to the native Sonoran landscapes seen throughout Tucson. With the goal of preserving this unique landscape, general landscaping guidelines were included in the neighborhood's initial covenants and restrictions. This included the creation of a Landscape Review Panel, a process for reviewing proposed landscaping plans, and a stipulation stating that any major maintenance of community trees will be addressed by the Board of Directors. Further landscape regulations can be found in the Winterhaven Water and Development Company's "Winterhaven Neighborhood Standards and Landscaping Guidelines". Content includes an explanation of the design zone, meant to promote a unified theme throughout frontage yards in the community, design standards, and a full plant list.

Irrigation

C.B. Richards oversaw the installation of the neighborhood's first irrigation system. This was to ensure the residents could maintain the required landscaping. The irrigation is composed of in-ground sprinklers in front of each home that water both personal lawns and street trees. During the first few years after development, residents would welcome new owners by installing a sprinkler system along their curbs. In this way, the residents made it clear to newcomers the importance that they placed on their lawns and each lawn's contribution to the character of the neighborhood.

Wells

A significant feature of the landscape is the set of three wells that provide all the neighborhood's water for both household and irrigation use. C.B. Richards

established the Winterhaven Water and Development Company, Inc. in 1948 in order to ensure the quality and upkeep of the neighborhood's plant material. Currently, a portion of the residents maintain their lawns with in-ground sprinkler systems connected to the neighborhood's three wells. The company continues to own and operate the three private wells that together form a self-contained system for the neighborhood that is independent from the City of Tucson. Water conservation efforts such as harvesting via the use of cisterns, berms, or swales are allowed by the Company, with the addendum that the cisterns be aesthetically pleasing or concealed from street view.

Streetscape

As with other aspects of this neighborhood, the streets and accompanying features of Winterhaven were intentionally planned by developer C.B. Richards and designer Tony Blanton. Connections can be made between this designed streetscape and the broader theme of a rising middle-class seen throughout the United States in the mid-1900. The streets are winding, a reference to the nearby affluent neighborhoods of El Encanto and Colonia Solana, and wide to accommodate the rise in automobile use. The importance of the car as the intended mode of transportation is likewise reflected in the inclusion of street-facing carports, rolled curbs, and lack of sidewalks. The lack of four-point intersections and preference instead for T-shaped junctions were chosen intentionally to slow traffic. The neighborhood's curvilinear roads and cul-de-sacs contribute to the areas park-like atmosphere.

Architecture

The landscape and planning of the Winterhaven neighborhood impacted the design of houses within it. The Winterhaven historic district is defined by its planned community landscape and midcentury, Midwestern design. One aspect of its historic built environment is the residential architecture. The residences are generally single family, mid-century modern ranch style buildings, and are rectilinear in shape with low roofs. As reflected in the streetscape, automobiles are integral to the design of the residences in Winterhaven. A majority of properties includes carports and are set back from the street to allow for large contiguous front lawns. The set back is significant because it is uniform throughout the neighborhood and contributes to the community's overall design.

The residences can be split into subcategories of ranch style house: transverse, traditional, modern, and minimal. These styles are notable for their angled rooflines, carports, and shared materials. Significantly, Winterhaven contains a large concentration of residences designed by Anne Jackson Rysdale. Rysdale was the only registered female architect in Arizona from 1949 through the early 1960s and the only woman practicing in Tucson at the time. Known widely for her commercial design projects, Winterhaven contains twenty-two examples of Rysdale's equally innovative ranch-style homes.

Social and Intangible History

The Winterhaven neighborhood is known for its Midwestern feeling that was a deliberate design choice by the architects and developers, and one that is enforced through design standards.

The uniform and lush atmosphere was originally envisioned by Richards, but soon came to be shared by the community through the creation of a neighborhood association and neighborhood review process. When enough residents had moved into the development, a board was created and the community itself began reviewing any proposed designs to ensure their compatibility. This sense of community ownership was a hope of Richards, which was further encouraged by the overall neighborhood design of Blanton. The defined borders and adjoining yards also lead to a strong feeling of inclusivity and connectedness. These values were a main selling point when the subdivision was first advertised, along with its link to the greater, surrounding community. Aspects such as proximity to good elementary schools and public transport were also mentioned as available resources often important to interested families.

An annual event that encapsulates the identity of this resident managed community is the Festival of Lights, which has happened each Christmas season since the neighborhood's founding. The festival, inspired by a similar happening in Beverly Hills, California, is a full neighborhood effort. Many homeowners plan their Christmas light displays months in advance, often working with or playing off their immediate neighbors. The neighborhood has described the Festival of Lights as their "gift to Tucson". Richards loved the festival and its contribution to the identity and notoriety of the community. In its beginning years, Richards was even the judge of the light contest, giving out a \$100 prize.

Changes Over Time

The Midwestern landscape has been maintained through a combination of ordinances and continued access to an independent water source via the Winterhaven Water and Development Company. Issues concerning the large amount of water needed to maintain this green, nonnative landscape have been raised by both property owners and Tucson citizens. In 2004, Winterhaven residents used an average of 295 gallons of water per day, as opposed to the 150 gallons used by other Tucsonans. This disparity is feasible because of Winterhaven's private well system. While these wells are owned and controlled by the Winterhaven Water and Development Company, their source is a major aquifer that also provides water for other Tucson citizens. For this reason, conservation advocates have argued that the turf heavy landscaping in Winterhaven should be eliminated, and that residents should participate in the same conservation efforts expected of other Tucson neighborhoods.

Currently, the neighborhood still maintains its distinctive landscape through its neighborhood deed covenants, which dictate front yard landscaping. Efforts to reach a compromise between integrity and environmental issues can be seen in updated ordinances. Now the minimum amount of lawn allowed in each yard is 50% of available area, with allowances for groundcover to be used in lieu of turf in areas of dense shade. Acceptable turf to groundcover ratios are stated in the Landscaping Design Guidelines. According to the Winterhaven Water and Development Company, since those initial numbers in 2004, the neighborhood has reduced its water use by 34%. Additional steps towards water conservation taken by the neighborhood include the installation of digital water meters, a rebate program to reward owners who install water-conserving devices in their homes, and a tiered fee system. Previously, residents were paying for water usage at a flat rate. The original irrigation system installed in 1949 still functions today, although some residents water their lawns by other means.

Besides their role as the primary circulation component, Winterhaven's streets have also contributed to the continued definition the neighborhood's center and boundaries. Some changes have been made to the individual properties in Winterhaven, but overall the original character of the neighborhood remains intact. Having been designed with the automobile in mind, and designed inwardly with well-defined borders, little changes have been needed to the layout as the community has evolved. A majority of the changes seen involve the conversion of carports into garages.

Overall, the park-like atmosphere and the connection of public and private space has been well maintained over time. As residents have moved in and out, little to no changes have been needed, resulting in its continued character and significance.

Sources: Canyon State Land Company. Winterhaven Subdivision Pamphlet. Place-Arizona-Tucson-Barrios and Districts-Winterhaven. Arizona State Historical Society, Tucson.

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Historian: HALS report completed as a class project in LAR 597j, Documentation and Interpretation of the Historic Built Environment (Spring 2019), College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture, University of Arizona. Gina Chorover, Instructor

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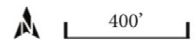
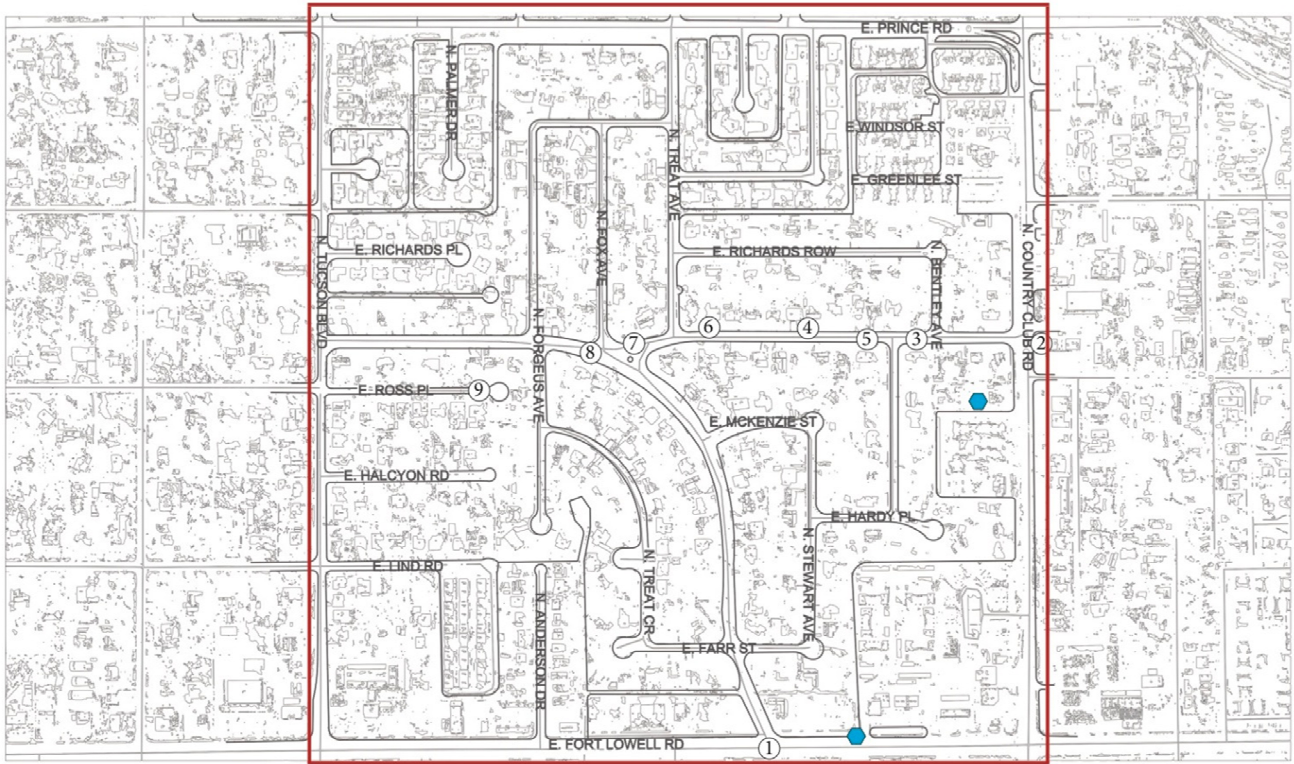
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2019 HALS Challenge Entry: Historic Streetscapes



- ① Entry Signage
- ② Typical Street Width
- ③ Typ. Curb/No Sidewalk
- ④ Mature Street Tree
- ⑤ Typ. Front Lawn
- ⑥ Typ. Mailbox
- ⑦ Typ. Front Lawn
- ⑧ Typ. Signage
- ⑨ West Well
- ◆ Other wells

Figure 1. Winterhaven Neighborhood Inventory Map, Cody Bonnet, March, 2019.



Figure 2. Entry Signage, Facing Northwest, Cody Bonnet, March 19, 2019.



Figure 3. Street Width (Approximately 38'), Facing West, Cody Bonnet, March 19, 2019.



Figure 4. Curb with no sidewalk, Facing Northwest, Cody Bonnet, March 19, 2019.



Figure 5. Mature street trees, Facing Northwest, Cody Bonnet, March 19, 2019.



Figure 6. Typical front lawn, Facing Southwest, Cody Bonnet, March 19, 2019.



Figure 7. Front Mailboxes, Facing East, Cody Bonnet, March 19, 2019.



Figure 8. T-Intersection,
Northwest, Cody Bonnet,
March 19, 2019.



Figure 9. Typical signage, West, Cody Bonnet,
March 19, 2019.



Figure 9. Neighborhood well, Southeast, Cody Bonnet, March 19, 2019.