

CAMPUS VISTA HISTORIC DISTRICT

Number of Properties: 200

Period of Significance: 1934-1956

**Predominant Architectural
Styles:**

Ranch, in various subtypes:
Transitional/Early, California,
French Provincial, Spanish
Colonial and Mid-Century
Modern Ranch.

Register Listings:

National Register of Historic
Places (NRHP) 2010

Phoenix Historic Property
Register (PHPR) 2003

The Campus Vista Historic District lies immediately north and east of the Phoenix College campus. The irregular district boundary encompasses six residential subdivisions, and the remnant of a seventh, all platted between 1939 and 1948. Almost all of the homes in the district were built before 1957, with most of them built before 1950.

The opening of the new Phoenix College campus in 1939, at the corner of Thomas Road and 15th Avenue, created demand for housing nearby. Undeveloped farm land adjacent to the campus was soon bought up by developers of residential subdivisions.

On March 8, 1939, the first of the subdivisions, College Addition, was dedicated. Reflecting Federal Housing Authority (FHA) guidelines on subdivision development, College Addition included forty-one 8,000 square foot lots, a slightly curvilinear street layout, and fully paid improvements such as city water, gas and electricity. The home sites were touted as being “just a stone’s throw from the beautiful Encanto Park and close to the new junior-college”.

With the subdivision plan and basic infrastructure in place, “homes with a future” were constructed in College Addition on both a speculative and a made-to-order basis. Reflecting one end of the local home-building spectrum, the operations were small-scale, with two main individuals involved in the marketing and sale of lots and homes. In 1940, Elmer Schler, a general contractor, built two homes “on spec.” W.J. Murphy Realty Company also advertised two spec homes with FHA terms available. Their labors were enormously successful. The subdivision was completely built out within two years.

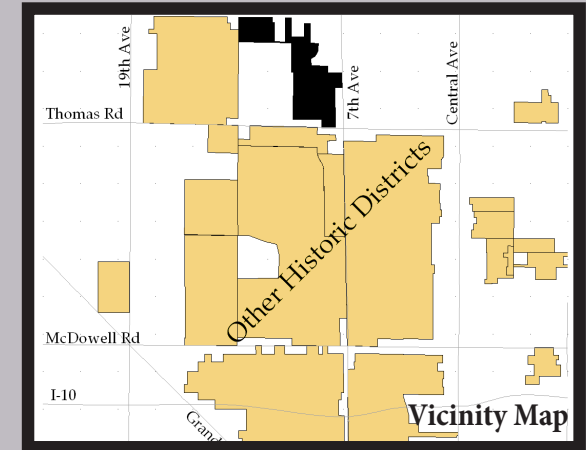
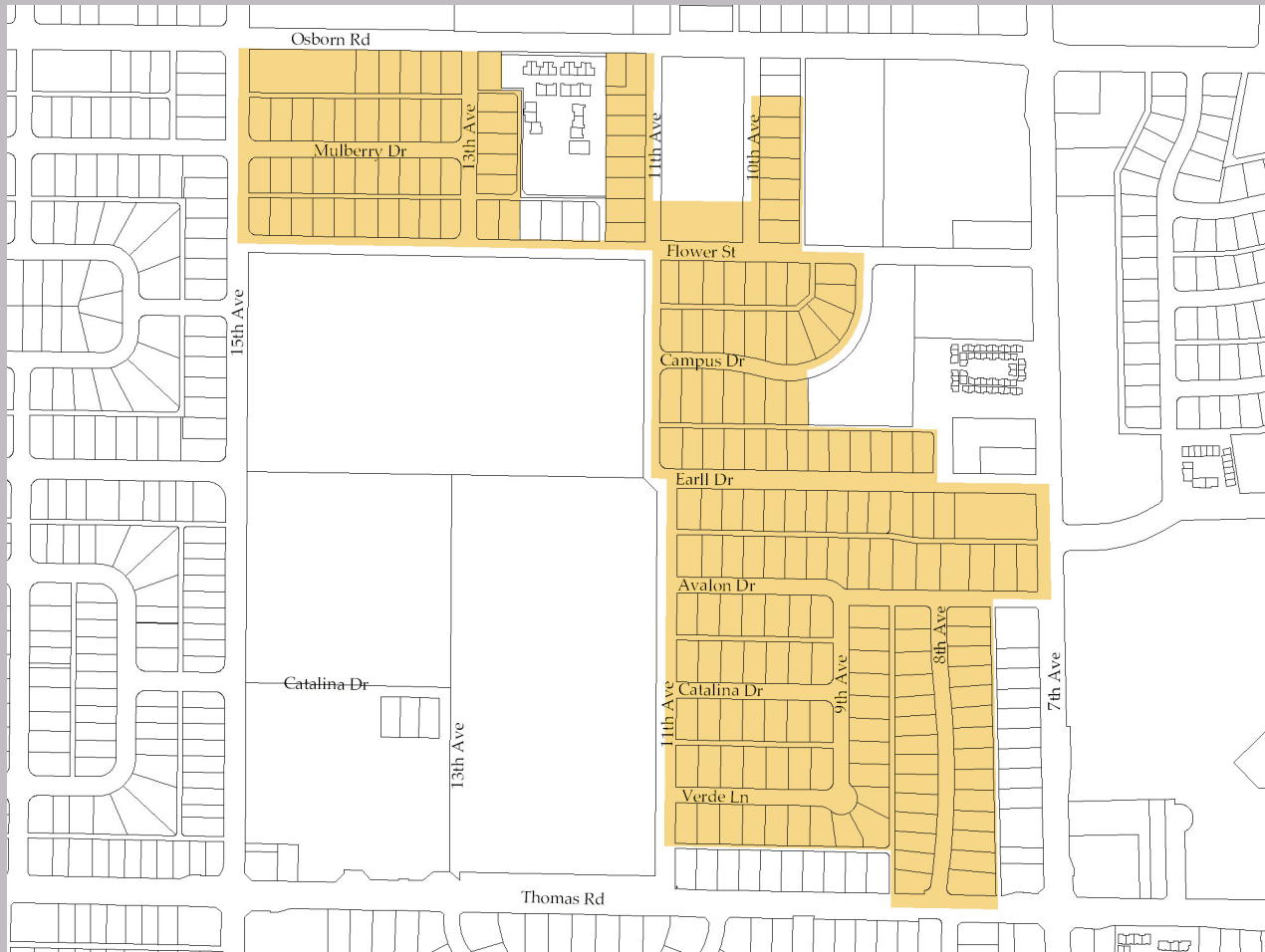
Other subdivisions soon followed, built and sold by a variety of mostly small-scale construction entrepreneurs. More than 70 different builders were involved in the construction of the 197 homes in the district, and most builders built only one house. Even the most prolific builders in the district operated on a relatively small scale, none building more than twenty houses. In addition to running their own speculative operations,

these builders were also hired by would-be homeowners, real estate developers, and even architects, to build homes for themselves, their clients or other potential buyers. Almost half the homes in the district were built before a buyer was found.

The wide variety of Ranch home styles in the district, and the discontinuous street pattern, reveal the influence of all these independent participants. FHA financing, used extensively in the district, required a certain level of coordination in the public right-of-way, and helped homogenize the efforts of dozens of developers. Covenants, codes and restrictions tied to each subdivision set minimum standards for quality of construction, and helped ensure an above average neighborhood that would attract middle-income residents. As intended, the neighborhood has been home to a number of students, teachers and administrators from Phoenix College over the years.



Campus Vista Historic District



Ownership within designated historic districts in the city of Phoenix carries with it both benefits and responsibilities. Exterior modifications and new development are subject to design review and approval through the Historic Preservation Office before permits can be issued. The Office also provides technical assistance to historic property owners and administers grants, when funds are available, for the preservation of historic properties.



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Phoenix, Arizona