



## **City of Phoenix**

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

### **Staff Report: Z-38-23-6 August 21, 2023**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Z-38-23-6 is a request to establish Historic Preservation (HP) overlay zoning for the property located approximately 200 feet north of the northeast corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Place and Orangewood Avenue [7519 North 9<sup>th</sup> Place], known historically as the Walter Hubbard Sterling Residence. Maps and photos of the subject property are attached, as well as an historic property inventory form prepared by North Wind Resource Consulting.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that rezoning request Z-38-23-6 be approved.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In August 2022, the owners of the subject property, Erik & Katie Humphrey, contacted the City of Phoenix Historic Preservation Office to request historic designation for the property. In October 2022, Ms. Humphrey completed an historic property inventory form, which prompted staff to believe the property was eligible for HP zoning. At the request of staff, North Wind Resource Consulting completed additional research and a substantially longer inventory form in January 2023, verifying that the property was indeed eligible for historic designation. At this point, staff added the Sterling Residence to its inventory of eligible historic properties.

On March 4, 2023, the owners signed an Ownership Authorization Form and Waiver of Claims under Proposition 207 allowing the HP Commission to initiate HP zoning on their behalf. The HP Commission formally initiated HP zoning on March 20, 2023, and shortly thereafter staff filed this rezoning application.

#### **PROPERTY OVERVIEW**

The property at 7519 North 9<sup>th</sup> Place consists of a 30,501-square-foot residential lot, with an L-shaped, two-story main house located in the southwest corner of the lot. Also present are a one-story guest house connected to the main house by a covered patio, an attached carport, a tennis court, and a swimming pool. The main house, which originally had the address of 7601 North 7<sup>th</sup> Street, was constructed in 1948 for Walter Hubbard Sterling and Dorothy Paine Sterling. The guest house and swimming pool are original to the property, while the tennis court was built in 1958-1959, and the carport

was added in 1998-1999. Please see the attached historic property inventory form for a more detailed description of the property and overview of its history.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The eligibility criteria for HP overlay zoning and listing on the PPHR are set forth in Section 807.D of the City of Phoenix Zoning Ordinance. To qualify, a property must demonstrate significance in local, regional, state, or national history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture, according to one or more of the following criteria:

- A. The property is associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
- B. The property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. The property has yielded or may likely yield information integral to the understanding of our prehistory or history.

In addition to the significance requirement, the property must also be at least 50 years old or have achieved significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance. The property must also possess sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance.

### **EVALUATION**

The subject property is significant under Criterion C as a good, early example of Contemporary-style residential architecture constructed in Phoenix after World War II. Designed by Sam Bell, a friend of the Sterling family and fellow member of Phoenix's postwar social scene, the home embodies elements of the Contemporary architectural style, including a flat roof with broad, overhanging eaves, large window walls, and the use of natural building materials, such as wood and stone.

Contemporary architecture was a key architectural style in the United States from 1940 to 1980. Early contemporary houses were inspired by the organic aspects of Prairie-style or Craftsman-style houses while later contemporary houses drew influences from the International style. As one of the earliest Contemporary-style homes in Phoenix, the Sterling Residence shows the transition from Prairie and Craftsman influence to International influence.

According to an article in the *Arizona Republic*, the house's progressive design included a ground floor with a "welcome entry" and a gallery of hydraulically operated window walls that opened to an outdoor patio. The first floor also included a dining area, with a

bar and a “St. Charles” kitchen, as well as a “children’s wing” that included four bedrooms, each with their own adjoining bathroom. A separate laundry and “servant’s apartment” were also included on the home’s ground floor. The second floor of the home was reserved for adults with a huge living room, bar, and balconies, and a master suite with two dressing rooms and a bathroom. A large, filtered swimming pool was located on the east side of the home and the entire property was surrounded by citrus trees.

The property has very good integrity, as the only alterations (beyond the reduction of the original lot size) consist of the construction of a tennis court in the late 1950s, and an attached carport that was constructed on the north side of the guest house in the late 1990s. The home is currently occupied and remains in good condition.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

Section 807.E states that, when applying the evaluation criteria in Section 807.D, the boundaries of a historic district should be drawn as carefully as possible to ensure that:

1. The district contains documented historic, architectural, archaeological, or natural resources;
2. The district boundaries coincide with documented historic boundaries such as early roadways, canals, subdivision plats or property lines;
3. Other district boundaries coincide with logical physical or manmade features and reflect recognized neighborhood or area boundaries; and
4. Other non-historic resources or vacant land is included where necessary to create appropriate boundaries to assist in meeting the criteria in Section 807.D.

The proposed HP zoning boundary encompasses 0.75 gross acres. It has been drawn to include the subject parcel in its entirety as well as the adjacent portion of the right way, as is customary in rezoning cases. The proposed boundary contains the documented historic resources and follows parcel lines and street monument lines as much as possible.

### **CONCLUSION**

The rezoning request Z-38-23-6 to establish Historic Preservation (HP) overlay zoning for the subject property should be approved for the following reasons:

1. The property meets the significance, age, and integrity requirements for HP overlay zoning set forth in Section 807.D of the Zoning Ordinance; and
2. The proposed boundaries meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 807.E.

Staff Report: Z-38-23-6

August 21, 2023

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Writer

K. Weight

8/21/23

Team Leader

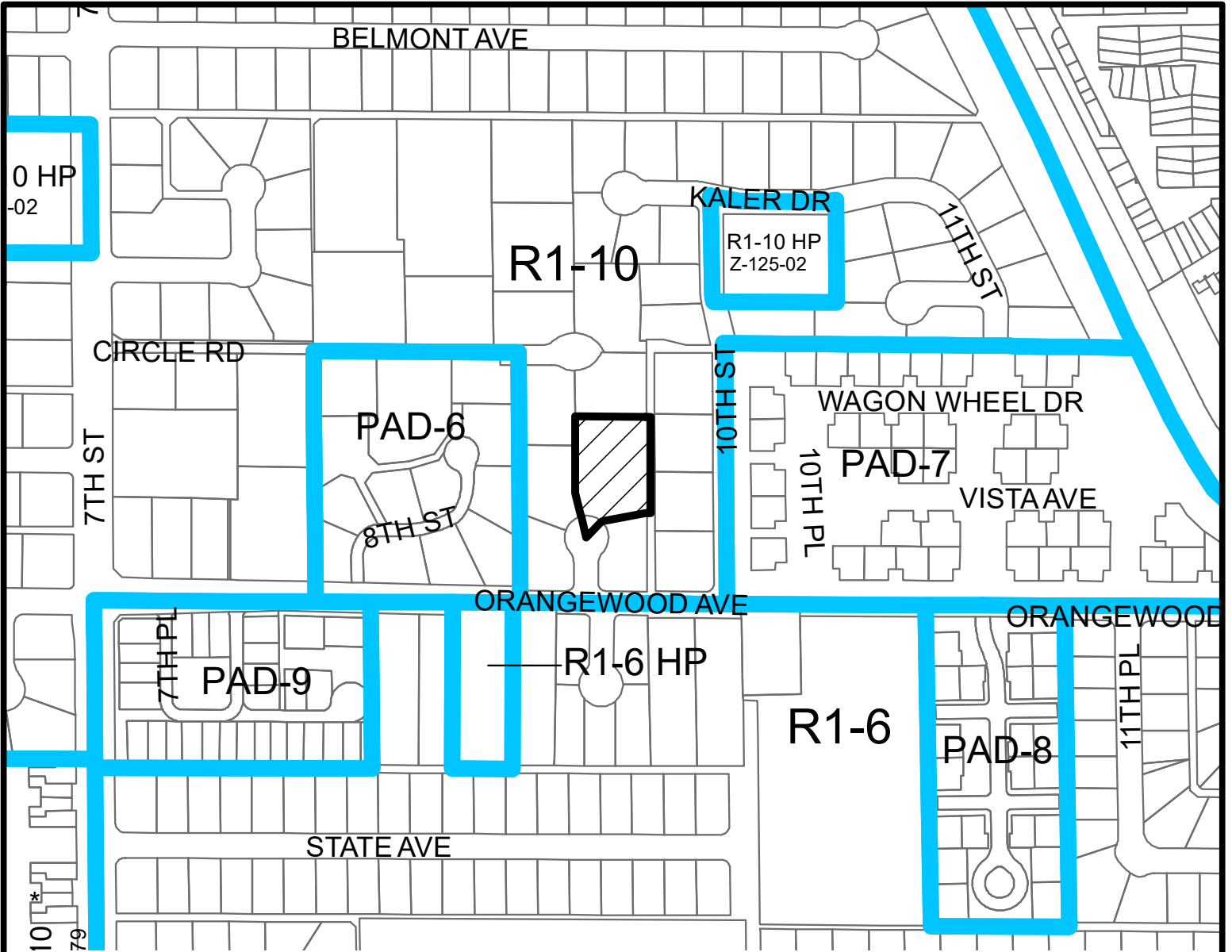
H. Ruter

Attachments:

Sketch Map (1 page)

Aerials (2 pages)

Historic Property Inventory Form (18 pages)



Miles

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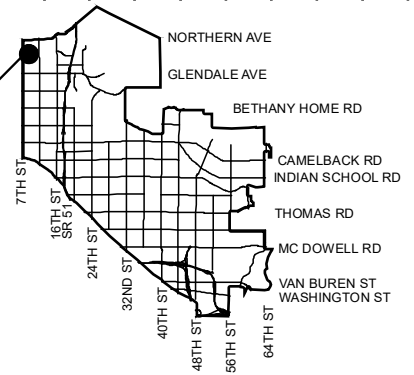
**CAMELBACK EAST VILLAGE**

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT: 6



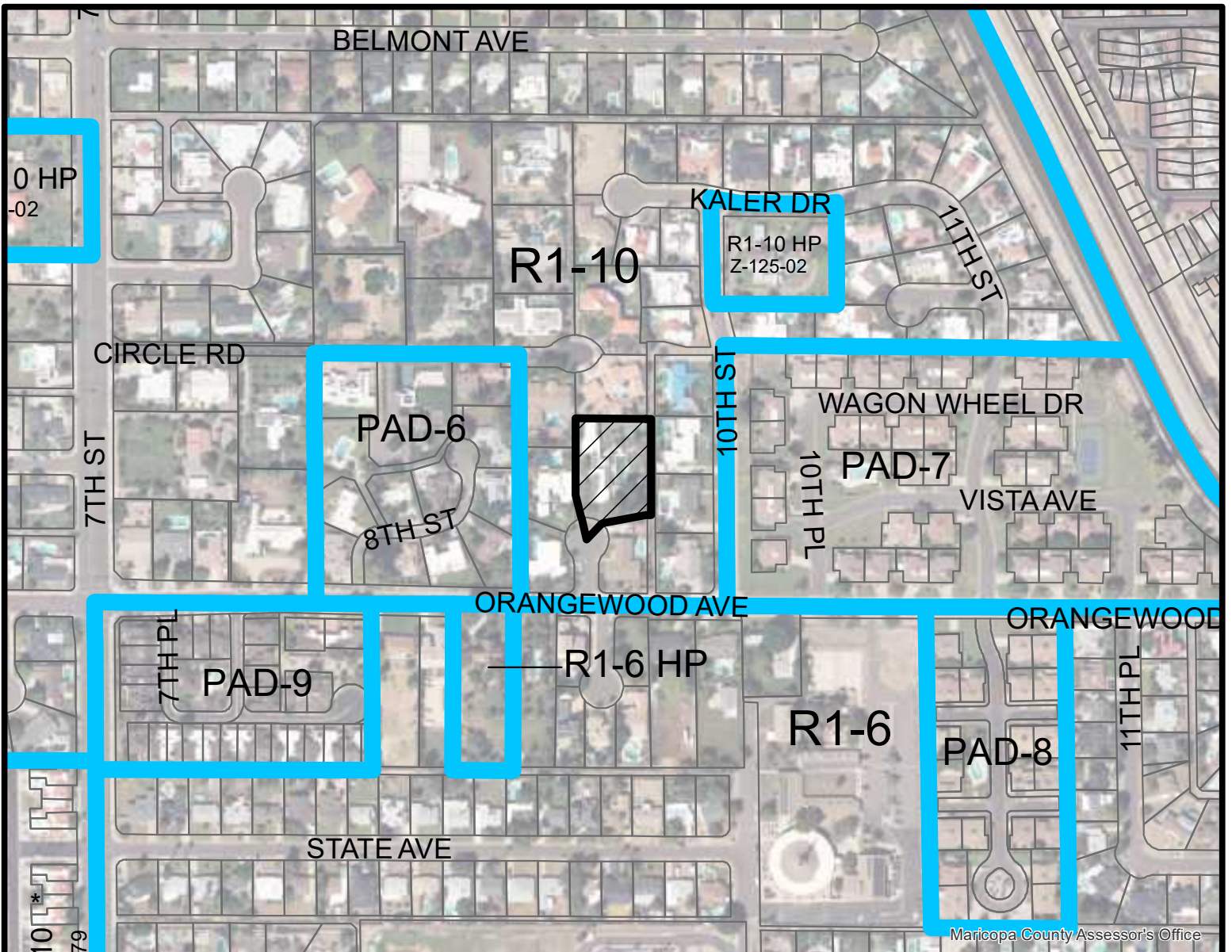
**City of Phoenix**  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Z-38-23



<b>APPLICANT'S NAME:</b> City of Phoenix Hist Pres Commission		<b>REQUESTED CHANGE:</b>	
<b>APPLICATION NO.</b> Z-38-23		<b>FROM:</b> R1-10 ( 0.75 ac.)	
<b>DATE:</b> 7/11/2023 <small>REVISION DATES:</small>		<b>TO:</b> R1-10 HP ( 0.75 ac.)	
<small>GROSS AREA INCLUDING 1/2 STREET AND ALLEY DEDICATION IS APPROX.</small> <b>0.75 Acres</b>		<small>AERIAL PHOTO &amp; QUARTER SEC. NO.</small> QS 24-29	<small>ZONING MAP</small> J-8
<b>MULTIPLES PERMITTED</b>		<b>CONVENTIONAL OPTION</b>	
R1-10		2	
R1-10 HP		2	
		<b>* UNITS P.R.D. OPTION</b>	
		3	
		3	

\* Maximum Units Allowed with P.R.D. Bonus



Maricopa County Assessor's Office



Miles

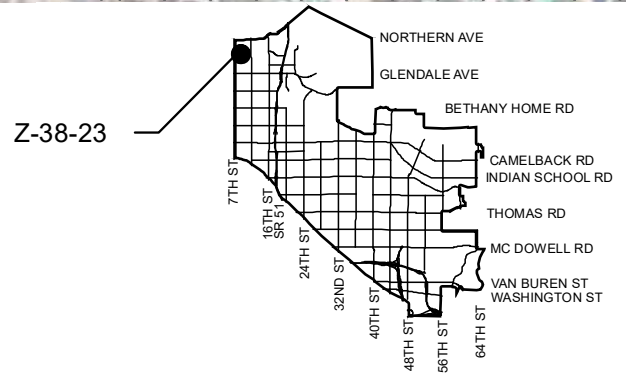
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**CAMELBACK EAST VILLAGE**

CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT: 6



**City of Phoenix**  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



Z-38-23

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<b>MULTIPLES PERMITTED</b> R1-10 R1-10 HP	<b>CONVENTIONAL OPTION</b> 2 2		<b>* UNITS P.R.D. OPTION</b> 3 3

\* Maximum Units Allowed with P.R.D. Bonus



**Walter Hubbard Sterling Residence  
7519 North 9<sup>th</sup> Place**

**Proposed Historic Preservation (HP) Zoning Overlay shown in purple**

# STATE OF ARIZONA

# HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM

Please type or print clearly. Fill out each applicable space accurately and with as much information as is known about the property. Use **continuation sheets where necessary**. Send completed form to: State Historic Preservation Office, 1300 W. Washington, Phoenix, AZ 85007

## PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

For properties identified through survey: Site No: \_\_\_\_\_ Survey Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Name(s): Walter Hubbard Sterling Residence  
(Enter the name(s), if any, that best reflects the property's historic importance.)

Address: 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place

City or Town: Phoenix  vicinity County: Maricopa Tax Parcel No. 160-18-056A

Township: 2N Range: 3E Section: 4 Quarter Section: NW Acreage: 0.70

Block: 1 Lot(s): 6 Plat (Addition): Circle Drive Villa Year of plat: 1968

UTM reference: Zone 12 Easting 401431 mE Northing 3712349 mN USGS 7.5' quad map: Phoenix

Architect: Sam Bell  not determined  known (source: Arizona Republic 1948b)

Builder: \_\_\_\_\_  not determined  known (source: \_\_\_\_\_)

Construction Date: 1948  known  estimated (source: Arizona Republic 1948b)

## STRUCTURAL CONDITION

Good (*well maintained, no serious problems apparent*)

Fair (*some problems apparent*) Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Poor (*major problems; imminent threat*) Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Ruin/Uninhabitable

## USES/FUNCTIONS

Describe how the property has been used over time, beginning with the original use.

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Sources: Owner

## PHOTO INFORMATION

Date of photo: 8/30/2022

View Direction (*looking towards*)  
northeast





## SIGNIFICANCE

To be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, a property must represent an important part of the history or architecture of an area. Note: a property need only be significant under one of the areas below to be eligible for the National Register.

- A. HISTORIC EVENTS/TRENDS (On a continuation sheet describe how the property is associated either with a significant historic event, or with a trend or pattern of events important to the history of the nation, the state, or a local community.)
- B. PERSON (On a continuation sheet describe how the property is associated with the life of a person significant in the past.)
- C. ARCHITECTURE (On a continuation sheet describe how the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.)

Outbuildings: (Describe any other buildings or structures on the property and whether they may be considered historic.)

The property includes a guest house and swimming pool that are original to the property; a tennis court that was built in 1958–1959; and a carport that was added in 1998–1999.

## INTEGRITY

To be eligible for the National Register, a property must have integrity, that is, it must be able to visually convey its importance. Provide detailed information below about the property's integrity. Use continuation sheets if necessary.

1. LOCATION  Original Site  Moved (date \_\_\_\_\_) Original Site: \_\_\_\_\_
2. DESIGN (Describe alterations from the original design, including dates—known or estimated—when alterations were made)

No obvious changes have been made to the original two-story main house; however, the original window walls on the east façade are no longer functional. A tennis court was built on the property in 1958–1959, and an attached carport was added to the north façade of the guest house in 1998–1999.

3. SETTING (Describe the natural and/or built environment around the property)

The property is situated on the northeast corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Place, a cul-de-sac that was constructed in the late 1960s. The property is surrounded on all sides by single-family residential development.

Describe how the setting has changed since the property's period of significance. The building was historically situated in a rural estate community and was surrounded by many acres of citrus groves. In 1968, the original lot on which the house is situated was re-subdivided into smaller lots to allow for denser single-family residential construction. A cul-de-sac (9<sup>th</sup> Place) was also constructed at this time, which now serves as the primary access to the home.

MATERIALS (Describe the materials used in the following elements of the property)

Walls (structure): Steel Foundation: Concrete slab Roof: Built-up

Windows: Steel

If the windows have been altered, what were they originally? N/A

Wall Sheathing: Stone veneer, redwood siding, glass panels

If the sheathing has been altered, what was it originally? N/A

4. WORKMANSHIP (Describe the distinctive elements, if any, of craftsmanship or method of construction)

The home was designed in the Contemporary architectural style by Sam Bell, a Chandler rancher and former sculptor. Archival research suggests that Mr. Bell had no formal training as an architect.

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS (if listed, check the appropriate box)

Individually listed;  Contributor  Noncontributor to \_\_\_\_\_ Historic District  
Date Listed: \_\_\_\_\_  Determined eligible by Keeper of National Register (date: \_\_\_\_\_)

RECOMMENDATIONS OF ELIGIBILITY (opinion of SHPO staff or survey consultant)

Property  is  is not eligible individually.

Property  is  is not eligible as a contributor to a potential historic district.

If not considered eligible, state reason: See below.

STATE OF ARIZONA

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM  
CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place

Continuation Sheet No. 10\_\_\_\_\_

Physical Description

The property at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place consists of an L-shaped, two-story main house located in the southwest corner of the lot, a detached one-story guest house which is connected to the main house via a covered patio, an attached carport, a tennis court, and a swimming pool. The main house is constructed of structural steel framing with exterior walls consisting of stone veneer, redwood siding, and glass panels. Stone veneer is the primary exterior cladding material on the south, west, and north façades of the home's first story. Redwood siding is the predominant material on the second story of the west and south façades. The first and second floor of the dwelling's east façade is comprised almost entirely of floor to ceiling glass window walls. Originally, the window walls were operated by a hydraulic pulley system; however, the system is no longer operational. The building has a flat roof with wide overhanging enclosed eaves on all façades. The main entrance is located on the west façade and consists of a double-leaf entry door that is recessed into the façade and flanked by two opaque glass sidelights. A bank of ribbon windows is offset to the north of the entrance. Additional ribbon windows are located on the second floor beneath the main roofline on the west facade. The window walls on the east façade are open to the swimming pool and tennis court area. A detached guest house, measuring approximately 650 square feet in size, is connected to the main house on the north side via a covered patio. Additionally, a carport is attached to the north façade of the guest house. A review of historic aerial imagery suggests that the carport was constructed in 1998–1999.

Developmental History

The house located at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place was originally located in Lot 5 of "The Groves," an upscale residential subdivision platted in May 1929. In October 1948, Walter H. Sterling, and his wife, Dorothy Paine Sterling, purchased Lot 5 of The Groves from Amy Sweem (Maricopa County Recorder 1948). Walter and Dorothy Sterling each hailed from prominent east coast families and were active members of Phoenix's elite social scene in the early to mid-twentieth century. Walter Sterling was born in Larchmont, New York in 1910. His father, Duncan Sterling, was a senior partner in the brokerage firm of Sterling, Grace, and Co. and a member of the New York Stock Exchange. Walter attended St. George's School in Newport, Rhode Island and was a member of the New York Tennis and Racquet Club (*Arizona Republic* 1936). He moved to Phoenix in 1935 and worked as a purchasing agent for the Central Arizona Light and Power Company. Sterling married Dorothy Paine on New Year's Eve in 1935 at her parent's winter home in Phoenix (Figure 1). Dorothy Paine Sterling was the daughter of Augustus Paine, Jr., a prominent businessman and former president of the New York and Pennsylvania Company, a paper manufacturing corporation located in Castania, Pennsylvania (*Arizona Republic* 1938). Dorothy attended Miss Hewitt's School for Girls in New York City and studied in France for three years. She was a member of the New York Junior League and made her society debut in New York between 1931 and 1932 (*Arizona Republic* 1936).

STATE OF ARIZONA

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM  
CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place

Continuation Sheet No. 11\_\_\_\_\_



Figure 1. Photograph of Walter and Dorothy Paine Sterling on their wedding day, ca.1935 (Image reprinted from the *Arizona Republic* 1936).

The Sterling family constructed their home in Lot 5 of The Groves subdivision in the fall of 1948. The home—which had the original address of 7601 N. 7<sup>th</sup> St.—was designed by Sam H. Bell of Chandler (*Arizona Republic* 1948b). Bell, who was also a prominent member of Phoenix’s high society, was born in Minneapolis in 1910 (Figure 3). His father was James Ford Bell, founder of General Mills. Bell attended the Hotchkiss School in Salisbury, Connecticut and graduated from Yale University in 1933 (*Star Tribune* 1987). Following his graduation, Bell studied sculpture for two years in Detroit, Michigan under Carl Milles, a Swedish artist and former pupil of Auguste Rodin. Bell completed two larger than life sculptures for the Outdoor Court of Nations at the New York World’s Fair in 1939 (*Star Tribune* 1987). His sculpture of a fisherman won first prize in the fair’s competition. He was later commissioned to design sculptures for post offices around the country. Although he was unable to serve in World War II (WWII) due to medical issues, Bell supported the war effort by working at a ranch management firm that raised beef to supply the troops. During the summer of 1942, Sam Bell “gave up sculpting completely and fell in love with ranching” (*Star Tribune* 1987). After the war, he moved his family from New York to an 80,000-acre cattle ranch in Chandler, Arizona. Following the move, the Bell family were eagerly accepted into Phoenix’s postwar social scene. The family frequently attended society events where they mingled with other upper-class Phoenicians, including Mr. and Mrs. Walter Sterling with whom they quickly became close friends (*Arizona Republic* 1955a).

## STATE OF ARIZONA

### HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place

Continuation Sheet No. 12\_\_\_\_\_

Although Sam Bell appears to have had no previous experience as an architect, the home he designed at 7601 N. 7<sup>th</sup> St. embodied many elements of the Contemporary architectural style. The influence of this style on Bell's design is evident in the flat roof with broad, overhanging eaves, use of large window walls, and incorporation of natural building materials such as wood and stone (McAlester 2015). Unlike the ubiquitous Ranch style, the Contemporary style could also be more easily adapted for a two-story house. As built, the house included a ground floor with a "welcome entry" and a gallery of hydraulically operated window walls that opened to an outdoor patio (*Arizona Republic* 1956a). The first floor also included a dining area, with a bar and a "St. Charles" kitchen, as well as a "children's wing" that included four bedrooms, each with their own adjoining bathroom (*Arizona Republic* 1956a). A separate laundry and "servant's apartment" were also included on the home's ground floor (*Arizona Republic* 1956a). The second floor of the home was reserved for adults with a huge living room, bar, and balconies, and a master suite with two dressing rooms and a bathroom. A large, filtered swimming pool was located on the east side of the home and the entire property was surrounded by citrus trees (Figure 2).

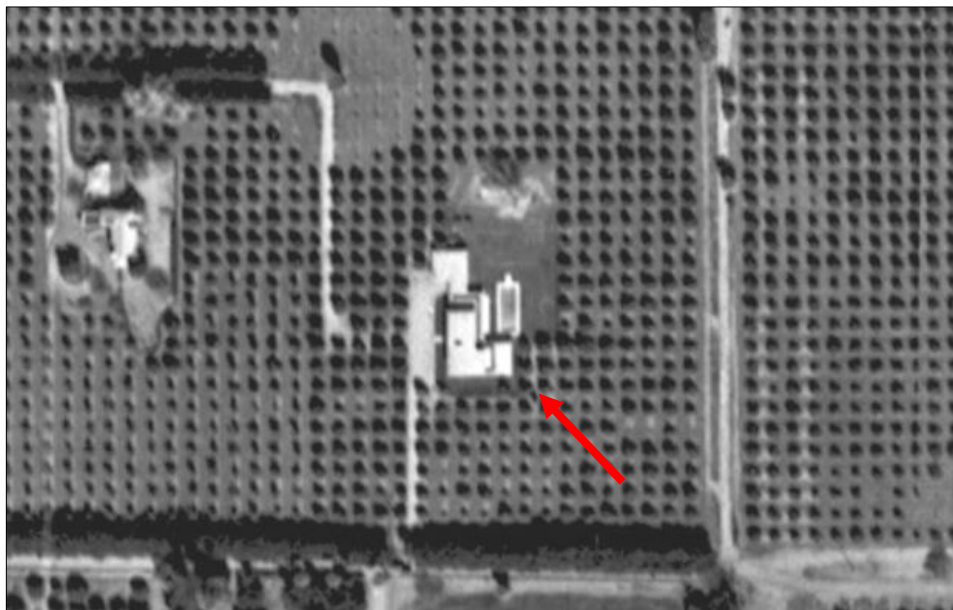


Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the Sterling property (denoted by red arrow) as it appeared shortly after construction, ca. 1949. Note the home's original setting in the center of a dense citrus orchard (Figure courtesy of Maricopa County Assessor's Office 2023).

The interior of the home was decorated by Katherine Morton, another prominent member of Phoenix's postwar social scene (see Figure 3). Katherine Morton was the wife of Wirt Morton, former vice-president of the Morton Salt Company (*Arizona Republic* 1948b). She worked as a "colorist and interior consultant," helping to decorate the homes of various well-to-do families in the Phoenix area (*Arizona Republic* 1948b). For the Sterling home, Morton employed "desert tones, off-white, saffron yellow, and acacia greens" (*Arizona Republic* 1948b).

## STATE OF ARIZONA

### HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place

Continuation Sheet No. 13\_\_\_\_\_



Figure 3. Photographs of the home's architect Sam Bell (left) and interior designer Katherine Morton (right) (Images reprinted from the *Star Tribune* 1987, and *Arizona Republic* 1948, respectively).

In 1950, the U.S. Federal Census listed Walter Sterling as residing at this address with his wife, Dorothy, and their three children (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1950). The census also indicates that the family employed a full-time cook who lived in the servant's quarters (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1950). Unfortunately, Dorothy Sterling only lived at the residence for a short time before her death in December 1950 at the age of 37. Walter Sterling remarried shortly after Dorothy's death to June Kaney of Phoenix. By 1955, the Sterling family listed the property for sale as they had decided that the home was too large for their present needs. Advertisements for the house boasted that it was "...one of the most unusual 'Party Homes' you've ever seen!" (*Arizona Republic* 1955b). The price of the property was listed at \$65,000.

In March 1956, the Sterlings sold the house to Dr. R. L. and Emily O'Toole (*Arizona Republic* 1956b). The O'Toole family were originally from Waterloo, Iowa, and lived at this address with their four sons, Dennis, Tom, Mike, and John (*Arizona Republic* 1957). According to aerial imagery, the O'Toole family added a tennis court to the north of the existing swimming pool between 1958–1959. The family resided at the property until 1961, when they sold the house to Irving F. Fogel (Maricopa County Recorder 1961). Fogel, a real estate and investment specialist, lived in the house with his wife, Rhoda, and young son, Barry. In January 1966, Irving Fogel was sued by Vinco Corporation, a Detroit-based manufacturing company (*Arizona Republic* 1966). The suit alleged that, while serving as chairman of Vinco's board of directors, Fogel had deliberately prevented the company from exercising stock purchase agreements that would have kept the company solvent. The company was seeking damages against Fogel in the amount of \$944,128 (*Arizona Republic* 1966). Fogel's legal troubles continued to mount, and he was eventually indicted for fraud in June 1966. The house at 7601 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street was subsequently acquired by the First Federal Savings and Loan Association in August 1967 (Maricopa County Recorder 1967). An advertisement in the *Arizona Republic* listed the house for sale that December. At the time, the property was described as "5 acres with a 2-story house in horrible condition" (*Arizona Republic* 1967).

In May 1968, the Arizona Title Insurance and Trust Company, as trustee of the estate, had the property replatted as Circle Drive Villa (Maricopa County Recorder 1968). The new subdivision included a new cul-de-sac (known as 9<sup>th</sup> Place) extending north from Conway Lane (now Orangewood Avenue). The property's street

# STATE OF ARIZONA

## HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place

Continuation Sheet No. 14

address was changed from 7601 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street to 815 E. Circle Road at this time. The plat for Circle Drive Villa shows the L-shaped two-story house, a guest house, and pool that comprised the original Sterling estate located in Lot 6 of the new subdivision (Figure 4). Also depicted on the plat is the tennis court and a small metal storage building, located in the northern portion of the lot. The rest of the original multi-acre Sterling property was subdivided into an additional nine residential lots for individual sale. A 1968 advertisement of the home boasted that the property consisted of a “2-story refrigerated manor house” on a ¾-acre lot (*Arizona Republic* 1968). By 1970, the home was occupied by Don Mahoney, a Phoenix real estate developer, and his family (*Arizona Republic* 1970). Although Mahoney died in 1972, his wife, Jean Mahoney, and their three children continued to reside in the house at 815 E. Circle Road for several more years (*Arizona Republic* 1972). In November 1974, Jean Mahoney was killed in a car accident in north Scottsdale (*Arizona Republic* 1974). The house was listed for sale again in September 1975, following her death (*Arizona Republic* 1975).

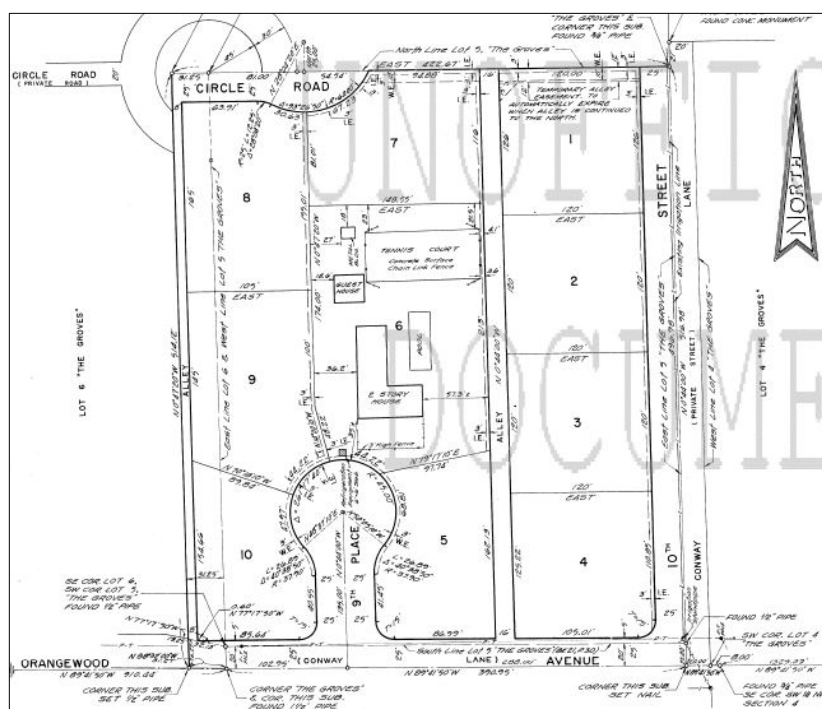


Figure 4. Excerpt from the Circle Drive Villa plat showing the layout of the original Sterling estate and its location within the new subdivision, ca. 1968 (Image courtesy of Maricopa County Recorder’s Office, Phoenix, Arizona).

The house was bought and sold several times over the next decade until it was finally purchased by attorney Thomas H. Curzon and his wife, Anne, in 1987 (Maricopa County Recorder 1987). The Curzon family owned the home until 2020 when it was sold to its current owners Erik and Kathleen Humphrey. The house is in good condition and remains in use as a single-family home.

### Additional Context

The development of rural estate subdivisions was largely dependent on irrigation improvements completed in the Salt River Valley in the late nineteenth century. Following the construction of the Arizona Canal in 1885, the project’s chief developer, W. J. Murphy, joined with other land speculators to form the Arizona Improvement Company (Murray and Weight 2010). The company consisted of a consortium of capitalists from California and Chicago, and local investors who purchased large tracts surrounding the original Phoenix townsite with the intent

# STATE OF ARIZONA

## HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place

Continuation Sheet No. 15

to subdivide and develop lots for sale to individual buyers. With the arrival of the railroad in 1888, areas in Phoenix's north central corridor were homesteaded by Murphy and his colleagues (Murray and Weight 2010). The homesteads were patented and eventually subdivided and sold over time. While many of these tracts were developed primarily for agricultural purposes, including citrus production, others were planned specifically for the construction of rural estate homes for wealthy city residents. Large estate subdivisions represented an attempt to create rural, exurban districts for the wealthy in the central Salt River Valley that were modeled on the garden suburbs of Chicago and Los Angeles (Murray and Weight 2010).

The first, and perhaps most important, of Phoenix's rural estate subdivisions was Orangewood, which was platted by W. J. Murphy in 1895. Located seven miles north of downtown Phoenix, the neighborhood encompasses approximately 2 square miles within Sections 5 and 8, T2N, R3E. The tract is bounded on the north by present-day Northern Avenue, to the south by Bethany Home Road, to the east by 7<sup>th</sup> Street, and to the west by 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The neighborhood is also located close to the Arizona Canal, which offered ideal irrigation opportunities for citrus growers. Murphy marketed Orangewood as an upper-class rural estate community, appealing to a clientele that was mostly comprised of farmers and well-to-do city residents (Murray and Weight 2010).

Over the next several years, Murphy sold several large lots in the subdivision, ranging from between five and ten acres in size. The average sale price per lot was between \$3,000 and \$4,000. Property developers hoped that the large lot sizes in the subdivision would attract an affluent class of homeowners who would construct large estate homes surrounded by citrus groves (Murray and Weight 2010). As a result, advertisements for Orangewood frequently used language that directly targeted upper class homebuyers (Figure 5). Inspired by Murphy's success with the Orangewood development, investor J. M. Evans platted the Evans Addition to Orangewood in 1897. The Evans' tract adjoined Orangewood on the south. Over the next several years, other developers and land speculators began to subdivide additional tracts in the same vicinity (Murray and Weight 2010).

**ORANGEWOOD**  
Secure a home among  
the Orange Groves.

**ORANGEWOOD**  
A most delightful place  
for a home.

**A PRINCELY SPOT  
IS  
ORANGEWOOD**

If you would make your home among the Orange Groves, ORANGEWOOD is the fashionable suburb of Phoenix. You can secure LOTS OF FIVE ACRES AND UPWARDS IN THE CITRUS FRUIT BELT, FRONTING CENTRAL AVENUE, THE FINEST BOULEVARD IN ARIZONA. Oranges grown in Arizona have brought in the New York Market, the highest prices of any oranges sold there this season, as the following statement will show.

Arizona Oranges  
Ripen Earliest.

Arizona Oranges  
Brings Highest Prices.

**ORANGEWOOD**  
The fashionable suburb  
of Phoenix on the finest  
boulevard in Arizona.

**ORANGEWOOD**  
Look into the prop-  
erties offered for sale in  
this delightful suburb.

W. J. MURPHY, Chicago, 14 December, 1899.  
Phoenix, Arizona.  
Dear Sir--Our New York office sold yesterday at auction C. F. X.  
Car 19157 containing 370 boxes Arizona Navel Oranges as follows:

65 BOXES,	96 Size,	at \$4.45 to \$4.50
42 "	112 "	at 4.10
190 "	128 "	at 4.05 to 4.20
42 "	150 "	at 3.90
18 "	176 "	at 3.60
17 "	200 "	at 3.45
2 "	228 "	at 3.35

These figures speak for themselves. Yours Truly,  
JOHN ZUCCA & CO.

The above Statement will demonstrate to those contemplating an Investment in Orange Lands, that it pays to GROW ORANGES in the SALT RIVER VALLEY. Full particulars will be furnished on application.

W. J. MURPHY, O'NEILL BUILDING.

Figure 5. Advertisement for Orangewood, ca. 1899. Note the reference to Orangewood as a "princely spot."  
(Image reprinted from the *Arizona Republic* December 23, 1899).

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In the early twentieth century, transportation improvements in the Salt River Valley further facilitated the growth of rural estate subdivisions. In 1911, construction of the Phoenix Railway Company's Glendale Line linked the Orangewood area with the citywide streetcar network, increasing property values in the neighborhood (Murray and Weight 2010). Similarly, during the 1920s, the proliferation of automobiles and improvements to county roads connected farms, ranches, and rural estates in outlying areas with markets in the city. Spurred by these improvements, new rural and exurban subdivisions were platted at an unprecedented rate in the lead up to World War II (WWII). In the period between 1911 and 1942, 19 new subdivisions were platted in Phoenix's north central corridor alone (Murray and Weight 2010).

The Groves subdivision was typical of the rural estate subdivisions platted in the northern part of the city in the early twentieth century. Platted by Ellen, Frank, and Sallie Brophy in May 1929, the neighborhood was located to the east of N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street, abutting the Orangewood subdivision on the west. Like earlier rural estate subdivisions, the neighborhood's development was enhanced by its proximity to the Arizona Canal, which formed the tract's eastern boundary. As platted, The Groves consisted of seven large "ranchos" that were sold to affluent Phoenix residents who desired to erect spacious homes on multi-acre lots (Figure 6) (*Arizona Republic* 1956a). The neighborhood appealed exclusively to wealthy Phoenicians, with development in the tract restricted to homes valued at more than \$10,000. Early property developers also inserted racial covenants into each property deed, stipulating that "No part of any lot, or the building thereon, shall be sold, conveyed, or leased to any person not of the White or Caucasian race..." (Maricopa County Recorder 1929).

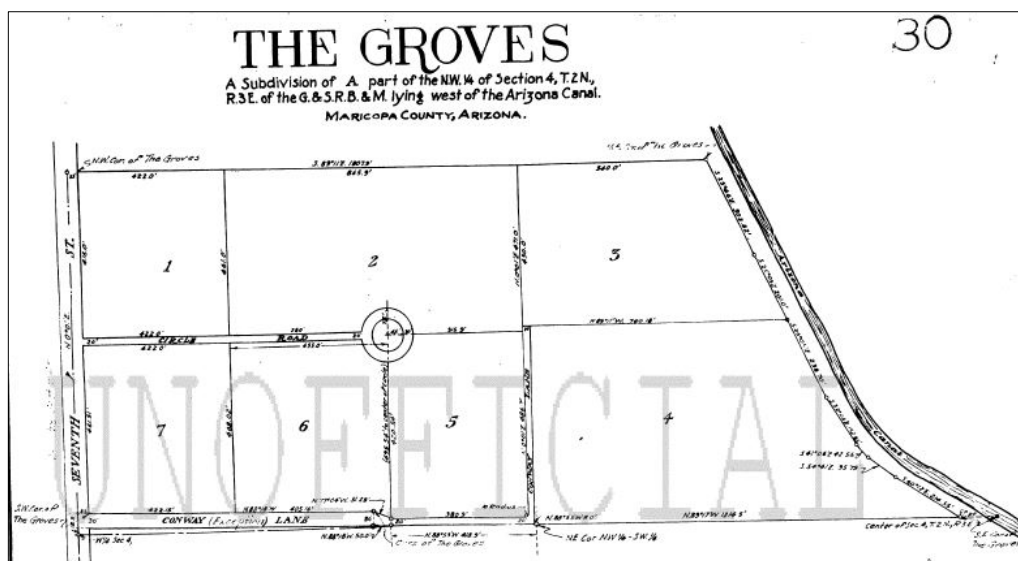


Figure 6. Excerpt from The Groves plat, ca.1929 (Image courtesy of Maricopa County Recorder's Office, Phoenix, Arizona).

By the early 1940s, most of the residential development in north central Phoenix was still in keeping with the rural estate character envisioned by W. J. Murphy and other early property developers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Murray and Weight 2010). However, as the city's population boomed in the aftermath of WWII, many of the farms and large rural estate properties were gradually redeveloped for denser single-family residential use. By the time the north central corridor was annexed into the city limits in March 1959, few rural estates remained untouched by the developmental changes that had occurred in the city in the postwar period. The Groves subdivision was one of many large rural estate developments that were re-subdivided during the mid-twentieth century to accommodate large-scale population growth in the city. Historic aerial imagery



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illustrates the developmental changes that occurred within the Groves tract, and which reverberated in older neighborhoods all over the city during this period (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Aerial photograph showing dense residential development in The Groves tract. The house at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place is denoted by the red arrow, ca. 1976 (Figure courtesy of Maricopa County Assessor's Office 2023).

#### Eligibility

The residence at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place was originally constructed in 1948 for Phoenix socialites Walter H. and Dorothy Sterling. The building was designed by rancher and sculptor Sam Bell, a friend of the Sterling family and fellow member of Phoenix's postwar social scene. Following the Sterling family's sale of the house in 1956, the home was subsequently owned by several other wealthy local families. The only alterations to the property consist of the construction of a tennis court in the late 1950s, and an attached carport that was constructed on the north side of the guest house in the late 1990s. The home is currently occupied and remains in good condition.

The period of significance for 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place is defined by North Wind as beginning in 1948 when the house was initially constructed and ending in 1968, when Lot 5 of The Groves was re-platted as Circle Drive Villa, significantly reducing the original size of the property and altering the character of the surrounding community. Specifically, the property was evaluated for eligibility under Criterion A, under the contexts of Community Planning and Development for its association with rural estate development in Phoenix in the postwar period; under Criterion B for association with the lives of significant persons; under Criterion C for Design/Construction as a representative example of postwar Contemporary architecture; and under Criterion D for information potential.

Based upon the results of the survey, North Wind recommends that the house at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place has historical significance under Criterion A for its association with the development of rural estate subdivisions in suburban Phoenix in the early to mid-twentieth century, and under Criterion C as a good representative example of Contemporary style residential architecture constructed in Phoenix in the immediate postwar period.

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Although the property is associated with the family of Walter H. Sterling, it is not considered significant under Criterion B as no information could be found that indicates Sterling made any significant contributions to the historical development of the city, the state of Arizona, or the nation during the time he occupied the property. Also, as the residence is a surface manifestation, its information potential has been exhausted by the current study and it is not recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D.

The NRHP defines integrity as the property's ability to convey its significance. Integrity is always grounded in a property's physical features and how these features relate to its significance. According to the MPDF for North Central Phoenix Farmhouses and Rural Estate Homes, 1895-1959, prepared by Arizona Historical Research in 2010, for rural estate homes to be eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development they must retain "... features that convey the setting, feeling, and association with their respective historical pattern" (Murray and Weight 2010). Likewise, for a property to be considered significant under Criterion C in the area of "Architecture" the building must be "significantly unaltered so that the design, materials, and workmanship reflect the original architecture for which they are considered significant" (Murray and Weight 2010).

It is North Wind's finding that while the house at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place generally retains its integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship, it no longer retains its integrity of setting, feeling, or association due to the removal of the mature citrus grove that once surrounded the residence and the encroachment of modern single-family construction within the original multi-acre lot. The following is a discussion of each aspect of integrity as it relates to the residence:

*Location: the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.* The house at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place was built on site and has not been moved; thus, it retains its integrity of location.

*Design: the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.* Although minor changes have occurred at the property, including the construction of a modern carport on the north façade of the original guest house, the main house has experienced no major exterior alterations since its initial construction and the significant features of the property's original design remain clearly evident. For this reason, the house at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place retains its integrity of design.

*Setting: the physical environment of a historic property.* While the overall setting of the house at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place remains primarily residential, the removal of the original citrus grove that once surrounded the residence, the construction of the cul-de-sac (9<sup>th</sup> Place) which now serves as the primary access for the property, and the encroachment of modern single-family residential construction has significantly diminished its historic character and its ability to convey its historic use as a rural estate home for affluent Phoenix residents. Therefore, the building no longer retains integrity of setting.

*Materials: the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.* The residence at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place still retains the majority of its historic materials including the original redwood siding, stone veneer, and steel window walls. For this reason, the building is considered to retain integrity of materials.

*Workmanship: the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.* The residence at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place retains its integrity of workmanship as the property continues to convey evidence of its construction and the aesthetic principles of the Contemporary architectural

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style, including a flat roof with broad, overhanging eaves, use of large window walls, and incorporation of natural building materials such as wood and stone.

*Feeling: a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.* Integrity of feeling is further defined as the physical features that, when taken together, are able to convey the property's historic character and function. These features include the elements that make up the setting and association of the property. Although the home's expansive floor plan and large lot size are still evocative of rural estate

construction, the removal of the citrus grove, construction of 9<sup>th</sup> Place, and re-platting of the original lot to allow for more densely constructed single-family housing has compromised the residence's ability to convey its historic function and character as a rural estate home constructed for wealthy Phoenicians during the late 1940s. Therefore, the residence at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place no longer retains integrity of feeling.

*Association: the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.* The house at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place no longer retains its integrity of association as a rural estate home due to the removal of the citrus orchard that historically surrounded the residence and the encroachment of modern single-family construction on the home's periphery.

The property at 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place no longer retains sufficient integrity of setting, feeling, or association, and is, therefore, not recommended eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion A. However, as the property continues to retain its integrity of location, design, workmanship, and materials it is recommended eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion C as a good representative example of Contemporary style residential architecture in postwar Phoenix.

**FORM COMPLETED BY:**

Name and Affiliation: Kasey Fulwood and Greta Rayle, North Wind Resource Consulting Date: 1/16/2023  
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Figure 8. Location map for 7519 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Place.

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Photograph 1. Partial view of north and east façades of two-story main house, facing south (Photograph courtesy of City of Phoenix, 8/30/2022).

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Photograph 2. View of east façade of main house, showing covered patio connected to guest house (Photograph courtesy of City of Phoenix, 8/30/2022).

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Photograph 3. View of primary entrance to main house, facing northwest (Photograph courtesy of City of Phoenix, 8/30/2022).

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