Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of signficance and applicable criteria)

Harold Bell Wright Estates is significant under Criteria A and C, at the local level of significance in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Architecture. Under Criterion A, Harold Bell Wright Estates is significant under the area of Community Planning and Development because of a number of ways in which it is ***typical*** of subdivision development in Tucson in the post World War II period while being atypical of development practices in other parts of Arizona and the rest of the nation during the same period. It serves as an excellent example of a common means of subdividing land during that period – one plat done by individuals who owned the land rather than a large builder or business. Other typical subdivision practices in Tucson included the method of construction and of financing for the construction, street layout with use of modified grid and curvilinear street patterns, and retention of natural desert landscaping. The subdivision is also significant because of several ways in which it is unique or atypical including its relatively large size, the name given the subdivision and its streets, and some atypical elements of its Covenants Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs). Harold Bell Wright Estates is also significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture – specifically the use of different types of ranch house designs, many designed by prominent Tucson architects and designers. Burnt adobe was a primary building material and the use of retained desert landscaping is also a character-defining feature of the subdivision.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Area of Significance - Community Planning and Development

The Harold Bell Wright Estates Historic District is significant under Criterion A for its association with Community Planning and Development at the local level in Tucson. In 2007 the City of Tucson commissioned a report entitled “Tucson Post World War II Residential Subdivision Development, 1945-1973,” authored by Akros, Inc. Using the contexts developed in that study, especially the one that addresses Post WWII Subdivision Development, 1947-73, it was determined that Harold Bell Wright Estates has elements in common with other suburban developments of its time, as well as being unique in a number of important ways.

Harold Bell Wright Estates, named for popular American author Harold Bell Wright, is representative of the post war suburban expansion in Tucson in that its development, as with much of the development of Tucson, took place to the east of the downtown where tracts of Pima County desert land were converted into subdivisions. This urbanization process was controlled and regulated under a county zoning authority that had just been authorized by the State of Arizona in 1949. In 1950, then owner of the 160 acre parcel of land, Mary C. Gardner decided to subdivide and develop the property. Gardner partnered with long-time real estate man, Lewis A. Romine. This was a typical means of subdividing property in Tucson at that time – one owner rather than a large company. The subdivision, excluding the land around Harold Bell Wright’s original residence, at approximately 140 acres was a comparatively large one for that time, compared to the average for new Pima County subdivisions in 1950 of about 60.5 acres. (Akros, 2007)

It was a common practice for developers in Tucson to file legal documents (“Covenants, Codes and Restrictions” or “CC&Rs”) for their newly created subdivisions intended specifically to provide for some compatibility among the homes being built, assure the continuance of a sense of a suburban residential character in the community, and maintain property value for its homeowners. In September of 1950, “Conditions and Restrictions” filed with the Pima County Recorder established “A general plan for the improvement and development” of the Harold Bell Wright Estates subdivision. The recorded document includes wording making it clear that the lots were to be used “for private residential

purposes only," and, in fact, the document calls for all the residences in Harold Bell Wright Estates to be "first- class, private residences."

Harold Bell Wright Estates was clearly a subdivision of custom homes as evidenced by the variety of styles and by the fact that a significant number of the homes were architect-designed. During the Post-war period in Tucson the average lot size was 9,400 square feet (Akros 2007). Harold Bell Wright Estates was significantly higher than this requiring a minimum of 16,000 square feet per lot. The developers also sought to attract a more affluent buyer with the design and layout of the neighborhood. In the 2005 "20th-Century Residential Landscapes" article, author R. Brooks Jeffery outlined a typical post war upscale neighborhood stating:

> As a way of distinguishing affluent neighborhoods from those of the middle class, alternatives to the gridiron subdivision layout were introduced… Although unique, each subdivision incorporated common elements: curvilinear street patterns in direct contrast to the existing gridiron standard, protection of the existing landscape, … and deed restrictions which controlled home-ownership, minimum construction costs and the architectural expression of individual residences. (Jeffery 2005, p 90)

Nearly all of the specifications mentioned here by Jeffery were part of the Harold Bell Wright Estates subdivision development. While a minimum construction cost was not specified, the CC&R's did require that homes be at least 1600 square feet under one roof. According to Akros (2007), the standard Tucson home size as late as 1966 did not exceed 1560 square feet.

In addition to the modified curvilinear street layout, another unique element about this subdivision is its name and the names of its streets. Developers knew that the name chosen for a new subdivision was a branding technique to be used as an integral part of its marketing, and so most of the names selected for Tucson's new subdivision developments during this time period were derived from Spanish in a conscious effort to reflect Tucson's Hispanic heritage. In the case of Harold Bell Wright Estates, Wright's widow's permission was obtained to name the subdivision after Wright and to name the streets after characters in his novels as a testament to Wright's overwhelming popularity as a writer at the time.

Harold Bell Wright was an outspoken proponent of preserving the desert environment at a time when such a viewpoint was not widely held. The majority of those who purchased lots and built homes on the land in the years following the 1950 subdivision continued to value the natural setting and maintained the desert landscaping, and that has remained the case over the years that have followed. The landscaping in the neighborhood is a character defining feature and is further described under the discussion of Criterion C.

The CC&Rs for Harold Bell Wright Estates contained much that was typical for the higher end developments of the period but it is also worth noting that one way in which the CC&Rs for Harold Bell Wright Estates are unique is that racial restrictions were ***not*** included in this document as they were in most other subdivisions in Tucson.

In terms of home building, the subdivision's development was typical of one manner in which post-war residential growth in the Tucson area took place in that it was accomplished for the most part by small-home builders who obtained financing on a "house-by-house" basis rather than by large builders mass-producing homes using prefabricated materials and "assembly-line" construction techniques. These small-scale builders, termed by some "jerry-builders," typically produced a limited number of houses annually and, as is the case in Harold Bell Wright Estates, still worked with such traditional building materials as burnt adobe and often collaborated with an architect to design the homes. These builders used construction practices and project management techniques that characterized home construction in the prewar period rather than utilizing the efficiencies and fabrication methods that distinguished building after WW II. It was not until the mid-60s that the large scale builders who made use of mass production techniques and limited design options entered the Tucson real-estate market.

Papers were filed In April 1957 with the Arizona Corporation Commission formalizing the Harold Bell Wright Estates Neighborhood Association in a manner that illustrates it to be a precursor of modern "homeowner associations." Although Tucson has many active neighborhood associations at the current time, this is one of the first to have been incorporated, signifying the strong sense of community in the neighborhood.

Area of Significance – Architecture

The Harold Bell Wright Estates Historic District is significant under Criterion C for its association with Architecture at the local level in Tucson. The district is representative of the broader architectural styles of the post war era in Tucson, namely the ranch styles, but also was unique in that the affluent nature of the subdivision led to larger sized and custom built homes.

The residences in Harold Bell Wright Estates are Ranch substyles or styles closely related to Ranch. The Custom Ranch style is predominant in the neighborhood. The name Custom Ranch, used here, reflects the more upscale nature of the Harold Bell Wright Estates, in that most homes were designed by an architect versus being built "on spec" to a developer's common model, which was the more typical style of ranch development in the post-war era.

Nationally, the Ranch idiom was expressed in conventional brick or concrete masonry, wood siding, or a combination of the two (in Phoenix, concrete block was the most popular wall material). But during the period of significance for Harold Bell Wright Estates, conventional brick was the most common material for exterior walls in Tucson; burnt adobe was the second most popular. In several subdivisions, including Harold Bell Wright Estates, burnt adobe predominated. The postwar Ranch style is usually associated with modern factory-produced materials; burnt adobe—handmade in a very old tradition— as seen in Harold Bell Wright Estates, was a definite exception.

Burnt adobe is almost always the wall material used for houses built in the Tucson Ranch style. As the name implies, the Tucson Ranch substyle is unique to Tucson, and appears to have been originated by local builder Tom Gist. Tucson Ranch houses are ideally suited to the Tucson Basin; their extremely low profiles "provided unobstructed views of the surrounding mountains" (Akros 2007:44). Six of the twelve Tucson Ranches in Harold Bell Wright Estates were, in fact, designed by the notable Tom Gist.

Besides walls of burnt adobe, the designers of the subdivision's Custom Ranches occasionally used referential Spanish Colonial-style features, such as wood porch posts with *zapatas* (corbels), wood lintels, and Mission-tile roofs. The few dwellings in Harold Bell Wright Estates classified as Spanish Colonial Ranch are even more elaborate. They exhibit all of the picturesque historicizing details, but still incorporate innovative "rambling" splayed plan and so represent a blend of period revival and modern Ranch.

The style that Akros (2007) defines as Postwar Territorial was based on the hybrid architecture of the Early Territorial period (1850s-1880s) in the Southwest, which fused the regional Hispanic building tradition with elements imported by Anglo-Americans. The original Territorial-style buildings were flat-roofed, constructed of traditional sun-dried adobe brick, and finished with lime plaster; their adobe parapets were capped with imported fired-clay brick (Nequette and Jeffery 2002).

As noted previously, CC&Rs for Harold Bell Wright Estates contained specific architectural restrictions. In addition, during the subdivision's period of significance, all proposed construction had to be submitted for approval by the Architectural Approval Committee of the Harold Bell Wright Estates Association (Marshall Smyth, personal communication 2009). As a result, compared to other subdivisions of the same time period, the dwellings built in Harold Bell Wright Estates displayed considerable individual variety but at the same time formed a harmonious whole.

Landscaping

In Tucson's early subdivisions, from the late nineteenth century to the immediate post-World War II period, the Pastoral landscape of lawns and non-native shrubs and trees was the norm: Anglo-Americans moving from the East and Midwest "brought their landscape with them" (Rogers 1979:311). There were, according to geographer Melvin Hecht, however, a few "aficionados… who found the desert visually and spiritually rewarding" (Hecht 1975:3); one of these, of course, was Harold Bell Wright, with his deep affinity for this corner of the Sonoran Desert. As noted previously, when he built his Tucson house, he ensured that the surrounding native vegetation remained intact, while around the house itself he employed ornamental desert landscaping, reflecting his fascination with the native species of cacti.

It took several decades for desert landscaping to become mainstream in Tucson. Hecht points out that the change to desert landscaping "began in the higher-priced subdivisions and gradually moved into the moderately priced

developments" (Hecht 1975:4). Harold Bell Wright Estates is emblematic of this shift as a higher priced postwar suburban neighborhood whose planning included the retention of the natural desert landscape.

Compared with other contemporaneous Tucson subdivisions, Harold Bell Wright Estates is sui generis. A very few other subdivisions—such as Aldea Linda, Jackson Addition, San Rafael Estates, and Wilshire Heights—have a similar combination of larger-than-average houses in the same variety of styles and larger-than-average lots with desert landscaping. However, these subdivisions are considerably smaller than Harold Bell Wright Estates, with more conventional street plans and less varied topography.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Community Planning and Development

The neighborhood's name derives from American author Harold Bell Wright. Born in Rome, New York in 1872, Wright, in the years from 1903 to 1942, was the author of nineteen books, and saw at least fifteen movies made that were based on his work, many of whose productions involved Wright and one of which, The Mine with the Iron Door, he arranged to have make its world premier at Tucson's Rialto Theatre.

While his work was never well received by literary critics either during his time or after, Harold Bell Wright was wildly popular with a large, broad-based reading public throughout the Western World. He was in fact, one of the most popular American writers of his time, being for example, the first American ever to write a novel that sold over a million copies. In 1930 The New York Times termed Wright …"the narrator of the hopes and dreams of the great mass of American readers from New York to California."

Beginning in 1912, Wright was an Arizona visitor a number of times before moving his family to Tucson in 1915 when his long-standing Tuberculosis symptoms were exacerbated by chest injuries he sustained in a horse and automobile accident. In 1920 Wright bought land and, after several years of detailed planning and preparation, built an estate (house, garage, and guest house) there in 1922. The isolated tract of land included some one hundred sixty acres located about eight miles east of the downtown. It was raw desert land and Wright was meticulous in maintaining it as desert landscape. Wright wrote of the location: "Where else in Arizona or the world could I find a site for this home of mine with eleven such ranges of mountains in the plainest view and in sight of the country I love best." As new developments and public improvements brought residences closer to where he lived and worked, he grew increasingly discontented. By 1932, he was spending less and less time working in Arizona. In May 1936 the Wrights sold the home and land and left Tucson to relocate permanently in Southern California.

The original boundaries of the estate encompassed about one hundred sixty acres of desert land in Pima County east of the Tucson metropolitan area bounded by Speedway Boulevard to the north and Wilmot Road to the west. In 1950, then owner Mary C. Gardner decided to subdivide and develop the property. Gardner partnered with long-time real estate man, Lewis A. Romine. Romine, who began his Tucson business experience in the 1920s as President of the Pima Motor Company, worked as a salesman and then as sales manager for the Tucson Realty and Trust Company from 1929 to 1937. In 1938, he launched his own company, L.A. Romine, Inc., and opened his office at Scott and Broadway in downtown Tucson. Gardner and Romine subdivided all of the original estate except for the property – approximately nine acres – immediately surrounding the house. (The house is individually listed on the National Register). The subdivision was a comparatively large one for that time, the average for new Pima County subdivisions in 1950 being about 60.5 acres. (Akros, 2007) With permission from Wright's widow, they named the subdivision and the seven streets they laid out in it in honor of Wright that same year.

In 2007 the City of Tucson commissioned a report entitled "Tucson Post World War II Residential Subdivision Development, 1945-1973," authored by Akros, Inc. The report contains extensive information that was relied on heavily to provide a contextual evaluation of the Harold Bell Wright subdivision. Using the contexts developed in that study,

especially the one that addresses Post WWII Subdivision Development, 1947-73, it was determined that Harold Bell Wright Estates has elements in common with other developments as well as being different in a number of important ways.

The 1950s were a time in the U.S. when the construction industry was booming. The year 1954, for example, was at that time, the second biggest year in the history of the American building industry. In the Tucson area, much of the development took place to the east of the downtown where tracts of Pima County desert land were converted into subdivisions with the urbanization process being controlled and regulated under a county zoning authority that had just been authorized by the State of Arizona in 1949. Pima County was the first county in Arizona to pursue enactment of such a zoning ordinance. The post-war housing boom in Tucson was also directly influenced by the emergence of such federally-insured housing loan programs as those offered by the Veterans Administration (VA) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Most influential in this regard was the Housing Act of 1934 which enabled the FHA to ensure building value for buyers by requiring the builders to follow certain design guidelines.

The years during which the majority of homes were built (1950-1968) were, for the most part, ones of economic optimism and rapid physical expansion in Arizona, especially in the Tucson and Phoenix metropolitan areas. The military had, during World War II, brought many military men and their families to this part of the country. A large number would return after their service had ended. Following World War II, the developing and then rapidly escalating Cold War did much to foster a focus on technology, particularly in areas related to aviation and electronics. In the immediate Tucson area, such an emphasis resulted in the dramatic growth of the Douglas and the Hughes Aircraft Companies. The L. A. Romine Real Estate and Insurance Company, perhaps not coincidentally, began their major newspaper advertising campaign for Harold Bell Wright Estates in the Arizona Daily Star on 3 February 1951, the same day that the Star carried headlines regarding the long-anticipated decision of the Hughes Aircraft Company to build a new world class electronics plant in Tucson. The advertising included wording about the new development's "Superb Planning", boasted that because of its location "at an elevation high above the city and with natural desert growth retained, the dust problem has been reduced to a minimum," touted its "large lots priced from $2000 including paving and other improvements," and noted that the homebuyers would find available "most city conveniences – paved streets, natural gas, water, and electricity."

It was a common practice for developers to file legal documents ("Covenants, Codes and Restrictions" or "CC&Rs") for their newly created subdivisions intended specifically to provide for some compatibility among the homes being built, assure the continuance of a sense of a suburban residential character in the community, and maintain property value for its homeowners. To help assure that compatibility, the document provides for lots to be 16,000 square feet in size and for each to contain no more than one residence structure with not less than 1600 square feet under its roof, one guest house and such "customary outbuildings" as a stable or garage." Nothing was to be built any nearer than thirty feet to the front lot line nor nearer than ten feet to any side lot line, and all proposed construction was to be submitted for approval to "an architect or agent appointed from time to time by Mary C. Gardner, or her successors in interest." This was clearly a subdivision of custom homes as evidenced by the variety of styles and by the fact that a significant number of the homes were architect-designed. During the Post-war period in Tucson the average lot size was 9,400 square feet (Akros 2007), so the requirement of 16,000 square foot lots in Harold Bell Wright Estates was significantly higher than typical lots in other parts of Tucson.

The Romine Company's newspaper advertising included a line on the development's "Reasonable Restrictions", reporting that with the neighborhood being "carefully restricted, this property will continue to retain its high value through the years." "The CC&Rs contained much that was typical for the period but it is also worth noting that one way in which the CC&Rs for Harold Bell Wright Estates are unique is that racial restrictions were not included in this document as they were in most other subdivisions in Tucson.

Another unique element about this subdivision is its name and the names of its streets. Developers knew that the name chosen for a new subdivision was a branding technique to be used as an integral part of its marketing, and so most of the names selected for Tucson's new subdivision developments during this time period were derived from Spanish in a conscious effort to reflect Tucson's Hispanic heritage. Thus, for example, Casa Solariega – 1948; Vista del Pueblo – 1949; Colonia Allegre – 1950; Clara Vista – 1954; Casas Adobes Estates – 1956 came to be. Although it was somewhat unusual to ask for Wright's widow's permission to name the subdivision after Wright and to name the streets after characters in Wright's novels, it is a testament to Wright's overwhelming popularity as a writer at the time.

Although atypical in its size, the subdivision development of Harold Bell Wright Estates was typical of those Tucson subdivisions that were being built with a specific customer base in mind. As stated in "20th-Century Residential Landscapes", Jeffery, 2005,

> "As a way of distinguishing affluent neighborhoods from those of the middle class, alternatives to the gridiron subdivision layout were introduced… Although unique, each subdivision incorporated common elements: curvilinear street patterns in direct contrast to the existing gridiron standard, protection of the existing landscape, … and deed restrictions which controlled home-ownership, minimum construction costs and the architectural expression of individual residences." (Jeffery 2005, p 90)

The post-war residential growth in the Tucson area was accomplished for the most part by small-home builders who obtained financing on a "house-by-house" basis rather than by large builders mass-producing homes using prefabricated materials and "assembly-line" construction techniques. These small-scale builders, termed by some "jerry-builders", typically produced a limited number of houses annually and, as is the case in Harold Bell Wright Estates, still worked with such traditional building materials as burnt adobe and often collaborated with an architect to design the homes. These builders used construction practices and project management techniques that characterized home construction in the prewar period rather than utilizing the efficiencies and fabrication methods that distinguished building after WW II. It was not until the mid-60s that the large scale builders who made use of mass production techniques and limited design options entered the Tucson real-estate market.

Papers were filed In April 1957 with the Arizona Corporation Commission formalizing the Harold Bell Wright Estates Neighborhood Association in a manner that illustrates it to be a precursor of modern "homeowner associations." Although Tucson has many active neighborhood associations at the current time, this is one of the first to have been incorporated. The Articles of Incorporation state that the Association was formed in order to "promote and provide for the general improvement of the neighborhood"; including work in such areas as:

- general scenic and other improvement
- general cleanliness and maintenance
- recreational facilities

The Neighborhood Association also formally took on the role of "agent or representative or successor in interest to Mary C. Gardner or her successor in interest for the purpose of approving plans for the erection of buildings … and for the removal of buildings from without to" the subdivision. The Association was thusly empowered specifically to:

- "promote, assure, and facilitate public services to and for the neighborhood"
- "act on behalf of the neighborhood to protect and further its development as a residential area"
- "own, lease, buy, sell, or exchange real and personal property, and to acquire the same by purchase, gift, devise, bequest, donation, subscriptions, or otherwise"
- "sue and be sued, contract and be contracted with in its corporate name, to borrow money and issue bonds, notes, debentures, and other evidence of indebtedness for the same"…
- "establish and promulgate by-laws, rules and regulations for the operation of the corporation"…
- "and … do all other things necessary or desirable to protect the health and well being of the members and welfare of the neighborhood as a residential area"

Harold Bell Wight Estates was annexed by the City of Tucson in 1959. With passage of Mayor and Council Ordinance 1895, passed in March of that year, the subdivision became part of the 61.4 square miles of land added by the city between 1952 and 1960 as part of Mayor Don Hummel's aggressive program of annexation. The subdivision's annexation by the city would inevitably, of course, mean tax increases for the property owners to cover the costs of such urban services as fire, police, public transportation, water, and power.

Beginning in 1972, on the one hundredth anniversary of Wright's birth, the neighborhood began to host an annual celebration of his birthday. That tradition has continued to provide the tightly-knit neighborhood the yearly opportunity to honor its now not-so-well-known namesake.

Area of Significance - Architecture

Architectural Styles

The residences in Harold Bell Wright Estates are Ranch substyles or styles closely related to Ranch. The origins of the Ranch style have been discussed in a number of articles (e.g., Allen 1996; Bricker 2000; McCoy and Hitchcock 1983; Peterson 1989); the most recent summary is in Hess' (2004) book, *The Ranch House*. The origins are traced to the vernacular building traditions of both early nineteenth-century Hispanic ranchers in Mexican California *(Californios)* and later Anglo-American ranchers. In the 1930s, these traditions, "modified by influences borrowed from Craftsman and Prairie modernism of the early twentieth century" (McAlester and McAlester 1997:479), were further developed by Cliff May and other California architects into a recognizable style characterized by low-profile horizontal massing, "rambling" open plans, and an emphasis on "outdoor living." These concepts were promoted by *Sunset* magazine in articles from the1930s on, and in three influential books (Sunset 1946, 1947, 1958).

As a California import, an early, very basic version of the Ranch style first appeared in the late 1930s in Tucson, as an alternative to the Spanish Eclectic style; after the war, the Ranch style became predominant. During the postwar period, some of the Ranch houses built here were indistinguishable from those in Phoenix and elsewhere in the country. However, the Akros study "identified many aspects of Tucson's development [including architectural styles] very different from development in the Phoenix metropolitan area during the same time-frame" (Akros 2007:5). The stylistic differences mostly involved regional association and materials.

Unlike Phoenix, which was founded by Anglo-Americans in the late nineteenth century, Tucson had been founded in the eighteenth century by the Spanish and until 1854 was part of the Mexican state of Sonora. Mexican Tucson's dwellings were built in the Sonoran vernacular tradition of sun-dried adobe brick, covered with mud plaster or left exposed (later, lime plaster came into use). This was the norm until the late nineteenth century, when Anglo-Americans introduced standard fired-clay brick (although in Tucson's Hispanic barrios, sun-dried adobe brick continued in use up to the 1940s). In the early years of the twentieth century, the concept of a regionally appropriate "Spanish" style became popular (this concurred with the increasing use of revived Anglo-American "Colonial" styles in the eastern U.S.) (Gebhard 1958). Initially, this was expressed in the form of Mission Revival, which was succeeded in the 1920s by the Spanish Eclectic style. Spanish Eclectic was popular in Phoenix and throughout the U.S., but only as one of many "period" styles (Roberts et al. 1994). However, in Tucson it was the norm; there are relatively few houses here in styles based on precedents such as Tudor or Georgian (Rieder 2000). In actuality, the Spanish Eclectic had little relationship to the Sonoran vernacular tradition; its popularity had more to do with the mythologizing of Tucson's Hispanic antecedents (Luckingham 1982). But this desire for what was thought to be regionally appropriate architecture was carried over into the postwar period in subdivisions like Harold Bell Wright Estates.

Nationally, the Ranch idiom was expressed in conventional brick or concrete masonry, wood siding, or a combination of the two (in Phoenix, concrete block was the most popular wall material). In Tucson during the immediate postwar years, when builders were catching up to the pent-up demand for housing, concrete block predominated; later, in the 1970s, slump block became the primary material (Akros 2007). But during the period of significance for Harold Bell Wright Estates, conventional brick was the most common material for exterior walls in Tucson; burnt adobe was the second most popular. In several subdivisions, including Harold Bell Wright Estates, burnt adobe predominated.

Burnt adobe is the popular Anglo-American term for adobe bricks fired in an adobe kiln. Historically, in the regional Hispanic vernacular building tradition, burnt adobe was used only for major mission churches (such as San Xavier del Bac and San José de Tumacácori) that required arches and vaulting (Giffords 2007). However, burnt adobe became popular in Tucson during the postwar years because local architects and builders understood that many prospective homeowners coming to Tucson from other parts of the country were seeking a sense of regional authenticity that went beyond the stuccoed imagery of the Spanish Eclectic that had appealed to an earlier generation.

Traditional sun-dried adobe must be covered with stucco; stabilized adobe brick (with admixtures of asphalt or concrete) does not require stucco but has an unappealing gray color. The ideal alternative was burnt adobe, which has a picturesque orange-to-rose hue and rough texture; it was relatively inexpensive and readily available from Mexican brickyards in Sásabe and other locations in northern Sonora. Masons laid up the brick with conventional mortar joints or used a mortar wash to increase the "authentic" look. Burnt adobe had its downside. Because the kilns used local

mesquite, the areas surrounding Sásabe and other communities were deforested, prompting the burning of tires when the wood gave out. Besides these "environmentally disastrous results," exposed burnt adobe tends to spall during seasonal freeze-thaw cycles (Vint and Neumann 2005:90-91). After the 1960s, burnt adobe fell out of use, but it still retains its appeal in Tucson, where realtors marketing homes from the 1950s and 1960s consider it a selling point. The postwar Ranch style is usually associated with modern factory-produced materials; burnt adobe—handmade in a very old tradition—was a definite exception.

Besides walls of burnt adobe, the designers of the subdivision's Custom Ranches occasionally used referential Spanish Colonial-style features, such as wood porch posts with *zapatas* (corbels), wood lintels, and Mission-tile roofs. However, the few dwellings in Harold Bell Wright Estates classified as Spanish Colonial Ranch are more elaborate. They exhibit all of the picturesque historicizing details, but still incorporate innovative "rambling" splayed plan and so represent a blend of period revival and modern Ranch.

Burnt adobe is almost always the wall material used for houses built in the Tucson Ranch style. As the name implies, this substyle is unique to Tucson, and appears to have been originated by local builder Tom Gist. Tucson Ranch houses are ideally suited to the Tucson Basin; their extremely low profiles "provided unobstructed views of the surrounding mountains" (Akros 2007:44).

The style that Akros (2007) defines as Postwar Territorial was based on the hybrid architecture of the Early Territorial period (1850s-1880s) in the Southwest, which fused the regional Hispanic building tradition with elements imported by Anglo-Americans. The original Territorial-style buildings were flat-roofed, constructed of traditional sun-dried adobe brick, and finished with lime plaster; their adobe parapets were capped with imported fired-clay brick (Nequette and Jeffery 2002). In New Mexico, this style was revived in the early 1930s and was soon widespread there. In Arizona, the revival came somewhat later and was much more limited; there are examples from the late 1930s, but it was not until the postwar period that the style became significantly popular here, where it is also called Territorial Ranch and Sonoran Revival (Comey et al. 2007; Ryden et al. 2002).

The term "Contemporary" was initially used by McAlester and McAlester (1997) to categorize a postwar Modernist approach to residential architecture that had two subtypes, flat-roofed and gabled; the latter was "strongly influenced by the earlier modernism of the Craftsman and Prairie styles" (McAlester and McAlester 1997:482) Hess (2004) classifies the McAlesters' gabled subtype as an important variant of the Ranch style. In Tucson, the style was used in both high-end and tract subdivisions.

As noted previously, CC&Rs for Harold Bell Wright Estates contained specific architectural restrictions. In addition, during the subdivision's period of significance, all proposed construction had to be submitted for approval by the Architectural Approval Committee of the Harold Bell Wright Estates Association (Marshall Smyth, personal communication 2009). As a result, the dwellings built during this time displayed considerable individual variety but at the same time formed a harmonious whole.

Architects

Arthur Brown. Brown arrived in Tucson in 1936 and started his own practice in 1941, establishing "his reputation as a modernist with a sensitivity to the desert environment of Tucson" (Nequette and Jeffery 2002:260). His 1955 design for 6536 East Shepherd Hills (Figure 32) is characteristic example of what Evans and Jeffrey (2005:41) call his "innovative client-specific work." He also designed 6425 Brian Kent (1958) (Figure 33) and, with his son Gordon, 6452 Brian Kent (1962).

Cook and Swaim. William Cook arrived in Tucson in 1960 and joined William Wilde's firm, which produced several major Modernist works in Tucson. From 1961 to 1968, Cook partnered with Robert Swaim, another well-known Tucson architect (Arizona Daily Star, 26 July 2009). In 1964, they remodeled the Custom Ranch at 6507 East Shepherd Hills (Figure 11).

Tom Gist. Although not a registered architect, Gist was a very talented designer. After service with the Army Air Corps in World War II (during which time he received the Legion of Merit for his design of a navigation computer for bombers), he moved to Tucson and established Tom Gist Builders, specializing in custom homes (he also did designs for other builders). By the time he retired in 1980, he had designed over 170 homes in Tucson (Allen 2000). As noted above, he appears to have developed the Tucson Ranch style; the appeal of his custom versions of this style (still sought-after today) resulted in countless budget versions in tract subdivisions. One of Gist's principal contributions was his role as a designer-builder in an era of increasing specialization. In Harold Bell Wright Estates, he is known to have designed six residences, among them are 902 Barbara Worth (1956) (Figure 8), 835 Barbara Worth (1959) (Figure 14), and 6555 Marta Hillgrove (1962) (Figure 34); the last is particularly notable for the bold key motif in the carport.

Jaastad and Knipe. Henry Jaastad, a Norwegian immigrant, arrived in Tucson in 1902. He began as a contractor and eventually became a registered architect, designing buildings in Tucson and elsewhere in the Southwest. Today his firm is best known for the work of his (frequently uncredited) associate Annie Rockfellow, who worked with him from 1916 to 1938; her métier was Spanish Colonial Revival. A man of many abilities, Jaastad served as mayor of Tucson from 1933 to 1947. In 1951, he partnered with his associate Frederic Knipe; they specialized in high-end residential design until Jaastad retired at the end of the decade (McCroskey 1990). Possibly because of what Jaastad had learned from his former associate Rockfellow, the partners proved to be adept at adapting Spanish Colonial to the Ranch style. They designed 801 N. Shepherd Hills (1956) (Figure 35) and (based on stylistic details) probably were responsible for the other Spanish Colonial Ranches, 722 N. Shepherd Hills (1952) (Figure 36) and 802 N. Shepherd Hills (1956) (Figure 9).

Anne Rysdale. Rysdale, a native of Tucson, trained with Arthur Brown. She started her own practice in 1949 and from that time until the early 1960s she was the only registered practicing female architect in Arizona. During that time, she designed dwellings in Colonia Solana, El Encanto, Winterhaven, and other eastside subdivisions (Fox et al. 2004). In 1962, she designed 702 North Shepherd Hills, a distinguished Postwar Territorial (Figure 10).

Landscaping

The biotic community classified as Sonoran Desert Scrub extends over much of southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico, and has several subdivisions (Turner and Brown 1994). The Arizona Upland Subdivision, within which the Tucson Basin is located, is especially noted for its distinctive vegetation; the iconic saguaro cactus occurs exclusively in this subdivision. Today this flora is considered one of the area's major attractions, but in Tucson's early subdivisions, from the late nineteenth century to the immediate post-World War II period, the Pastoral landscape of lawns and non-native shrubs and trees was the norm: Anglo-Americans moving from the East and Midwest "brought their landscape with them" (Rogers 1979:311). There were, however, a few "aficionados… who found the desert visually and spiritually rewarding" (Hecht 1975:3); one of these, of course, was Harold Bell Wright, with his deep affinity for this corner of the Sonoran Desert. As noted previously, when he built his Tucson house, he ensured that the surrounding native vegetation remained intact, while around the house itself he employed ornamental desert landscaping, reflecting his fascination with the native species of cacti: "The cactus blooms, rain or no rain…But when their time is fulfilled, no matter how unfavorable the season, they burst forth with offerings of breath-taking loveliness…I like to think that God gives to the cactus this beauty rare and fine, because it has fought the good fight" (Langdon 1975:88). Vintage postcards (Figures 37 and 38) show the landscape of Wright's estate.

It took several decades for desert landscaping to become mainstream in Tucson. An early example, platted in 1928, was the Colonia Solana subdivision (listed in 1989; amended 2000, 2003), where the curvilinear street layout conformed to the natural topography, allowing substantial portions of retained desert. However, the major shift in landscape taste did not occur until the postwar period. As summarized by Hecht (1975:4),

> the grass lawn tradition was not seriously challenged in Tucson until the early 1950s. Thousands of ex-servicemen who had been stationed in southwestern Arizona during the war returned to settle. Although the climate was the chief attraction, the desert landscape also appears to have appealed more to them than it did to earlier settlers…Many new settlers saw the same beauty, spaciousness and natural drama in the desert landscape that appeal to readers of Arizona Highways…

He goes on to point out that the change to desert landscaping "began in the higher-priced subdivisions and gradually moved into the moderately priced developments" (Hecht 1975:4). The other major factor in the change besides landscape taste was the issue of water in a desert environment. Tucson has been entirely dependent on groundwater for the past century, but it was not until the mid-1970s that the declining supply became a general matter of concern (McPherson and Haip 1989). Since that time, the City of Tucson and its residents have more or less adopted xeriscape for both public and private properties. However, the homeowners of Harold Bell Wright Estates already had Wright's own landscaping model to follow.

Compared with other contemporaneous Tucson subdivisions, Harold Bell Wright Estates is sui generis. A very few other subdivisions—such as Aldea Linda, Jackson Addition, San Rafael Estates, and Wilshire Heights—have a similar combination of larger-than-average houses in the same variety of styles and larger-than-average lots with desert landscaping. However, these subdivisions are considerably smaller than Harold Bell Wright Estates, with more conventional street plans and less varied topography.

Additional information about Harold Bell Wright

During the years that Wright lived and worked at his isolated desert estate, he maintained a high level of interest in his adopted town and became one of Tucson's leading citizens. Because of his work on behalf of St. Mary's Hospital, the Temple of Music and Art, the Emergency Relief Fund, and a number of other worthwhile local causes, he was held in high regard by his fellow citizens, and, as reported in 1931 in the local newspaper:

> "Time and again there has been a search for the outstanding personality of Tucson and each time the laurels of 'first citizen' have been awarded, by popular and informal opinion, to Harold Bell Wright, author, artist, sportsman, former minister, philanthropist and 'prince of good fellows.'" (Sell 2000)

In 1924, Wright published a magazine article entitled "Why I Did Not Die", which included glowing phrases of praise for the healthy benefits of "the healing rays of the southwestern sun." Soon after its appearance, the Tucson Sunshine-Climate Club reprinted the article as a pamphlet and distributed it widely. For many years the pamphlet served as an important tool for Tucson boosterism, therefore ironically helping to increase the flow of population into the area that led directly to the expansion of Tucson westward toward what had been Wright's isolated property. And so, although Wright loved the Arizona climate and Tucson, things began to change over the years, in large part because of influences directly attributable to him. For one thing, part of the price he paid for his popularity with America's readers and movie-goers was a significant and increasing loss of the privacy he so prized. The much-too-frequent interruptions he endured from uninvited guests began to adversely affect his work. There is also the inescapable fact that Wright exerted a direct and powerful impact on the manner in which Tucson's growth took place in the years following the construction of his estate. As new developments and public improvements brought residences closer to where he lived and worked, he grew increasingly discontented. By 1932, he was spending less and less time working in Arizona. In May 1936 the Wrights sold the home and land and left Tucson to relocate permanently in Southern California.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 116 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	12	513400	3566350
2	12	513600	3566350
3	12	513600	3566470
4	12	513710	3566470

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary of the Harold Bell Wright Estates Historic District is shown on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary corresponds to that of the original subdivision plat filed in 1950, excluding peripheral commercial development that postdates the period of significance.