



TUCSON
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
FOUNDATION

September 4, 2026

Pima County Development Services Department
(520) 724-9000

Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee
% City of Tucson Clerk

**Re: Historic Landmark Zone for 7110 N. Camino de Fosforo, Tucson, Arizona 85718
Celestine Barby II House, (Architect: Bruce Goff), Tax ID: 108-05-0960; Legal description:
Vista de las Candelas Estates No 3. Lot 99**

On behalf of owner Janet and David Johnson, we are pleased to submit the sixth Pima County Historic Landmark Zone application for Celestine Barby II House designed by the American 20th Century master architect Bruce Goff.

This historic property and home meet the Pima County Historic Landmark Zone (Ch. 18.63) Application Criteria. The historic house is a historic resource within a human-made landscapes or spaces, which has been individually determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance and meets eight application criteria: 1. It is authenticated as dating from a particular significant period in Pima County's history (1962). 2. Is associated with the lives of outstanding historical personages Bruce Goff and Celestine Barby. 3. Is associated with significant events or occurrences: The architectural work of Bruce Goff and Architecture of the Modern Movement in Tucson. 4. is a significant example of the architectural period in which it was built and has distinguishing characteristics of an designed building in Tucson and Arizona, method of construction: is the only known example of a Bruce Goff single-family residential building. 5. Is a notated work of architect Bruce Goff. 6. Contributes information of historical, cultural, and social importance relating to the heritage of the community. 6 Is in its original setting which contributes to an understanding of the heritage of

the community and provides the area with a sense of uniqueness. 7. Is readily distinguishable from other areas of the community. 8. Possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, thus constituting a recognizable entity.

In addition to meeting the application criteria the submission packet include the following seven requirements:

A. Legal description of the property: Vista de las Candelas Estates No 3. Lot 99

B. *A list by name and title, of all ownership interests in the property:* JOHNSON DAVID R & JANET L JT/RS

C. [Letter of authorization for an agent. See Attached.](#)

D. *Site plan:* to be sent.

E. [A completed State of Arizona Historic Property Inventory Form attached.](#)

F. *Other supporting evidence:* Determination of Eligibility from the State Historic Preservation Officer. anticipated.

G. *Most recent (available) aerial, USGS Map, and elevation and interior photos:* See Attached.

We look forward to working with Pima County, the T-PCHC committee and your office on the successful designation of this important property as the next Pima County Historic Landmark.



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CC: Jan Leshar, Pima County Administrator
Ian Milliken, Pima County Office for Preservation of Cultural, Archaeological, and Heritage Resources

PROPERTY LOCATION INFORMATION

Project Name: Celestine Barby II House

Property Address: 7110 N. Camino de Fosforo, Tucson, Arizona 85718

Architect/Designer: Bruce Goff

Builder: James L. Hamilton

Plat Name: Vista de las Candelas Estates No 3. Lot 99

Built: Designed 1974, completed 1976

Pima County Parcel Number/s: 108-05-0960 Parcel Use: Residential

APPLICANT INFORMATION

APPLICANT NAME: Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation

ADDRESS: PO Box 40008, Tucson, Arizona, 85717

PHONE: 520-247-8969

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PROPERTY OWNER NAME: Janet and Dave Johnson

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Fig. 1 Celestine Barby II House, Northwest Elevation, Photo by GMVargas 2025

Property Description

Summary Description

The Celestine Barby II House, located at 7110 North Camino de Fosforo, Tucson, Arizona 85718, occupies Lot 99 of Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3 in the Catalina Foothills north of Tucson. Designed by internationally recognized American master architect Bruce Alonzo Goff (1904–1982) for artist and collector Celestine “Lestie” Barby, the residence was conceived in 1974 and developed through an unusually extensive series of presentation drawings, design studies, working drawings, engineering studies, furniture drawings, and construction documents extending through 1975. The Art Institute of Chicago’s Bruce Goff Collection identifies the project as De Long Job 74.01 and preserves presentation drawings. The archive also documents successive plan studies, preliminary and final elevations, wall and window details, framing studies, site-slope calculations, custom furniture, a beam-stencil design, and multiple working-drawing sets.

Construction was undertaken by general contractor James L. Hamilton, and contemporary evidence indicates that the residence was completed approximately two years after Goff began the design in 1976.

The house is an irregular, multi-level masonry residence organized as two elongated wings meeting at an approximately 120-degree angle. This open-angle geometry is fundamental to both the plan and the building's relationship to its ridge-top site. Rather than organizing the house as a conventional rectilinear box, Goff opened the two principal wings outward across the landscape, orienting rooms, balconies, windows, and terraces toward multiple distant views. The site lies on the nose of a ridge, with Pima Canyon to the north, the Tucson Basin to the south, the Rincon Mountains toward the east, and Wasson Peak and the Tucson Mountains toward the west.

The residence combines buff to warm tan exposed brick masonry, reinforced concrete, exposed wood roof framing, extensive glazing, steel railings and structural elements, flakeboard or chipboard cabinetry and partitions, and a broad low roof with dramatically uplifted ends. The exterior is simultaneously massive and visually light. Thick masonry walls anchor the building to the ridge, while clerestory glazing, projecting beams, balconies, deep roof overhangs, and the thin apparent profile of the roof create visual separation between wall and canopy. At selected openings, the masonry does not terminate conventionally in straight jambs. Instead, bricks project and recede incrementally to form stepped or corbelled margins, producing deeply sculptural openings in which wall, window, shadow, and structure are integrated.

The roof is the dominant exterior silhouette. It reads as an expansive, shallow plane spanning above the masonry enclosure, but its perimeter is not rigidly horizontal. The outer portions rise and flare upward, producing pointed, wing-like terminations that are especially dramatic at the building corners and convey an Asian inspired quality. Contemporary photographs clearly document these lifted roof ends, exposed framing below the roof plane, and the visual gap created by clerestory glazing between roof and wall. The roof framing is expressed on the interior and, at portions of the perimeter, on the exterior. Its exposed beams carry an original polychrome geometric stencil pattern designed specifically for the house by Goff. The Art Institute archive preserves Goff's half-size design for the stenciled beams, explicitly identified as being for the Celestine Barby House.

The interior is conceived as a continuous, terraced spatial composition rather than as a conventional sequence of enclosed rooms. Public areas occupy an expansive central volume in which changes in elevation, ramps, railings, cabinetry, low partitions, and built-in elements define use without interrupting the larger space. The roof structure remains continuously visible overhead, visually unifying the interior. The principal living area is arranged around a suspended black metal fireplace and a historically documented geometric floor or hearth composition. Current photographs show that the fundamental spatial organization survives, including the sunken living area, raised circulation zones, ramps, masonry walls, exposed roof structure, and suspended fireplace.

The architectural archive confirms the high degree to which the residence was developed as an integrated design. The September 10, 1974 working-drawing set includes the plot plan, slab plan, first- and second-floor plans, living-room framing plan, stair details, four building elevations, sections, roof framing, canopy framing, mechanical plans, and specifications. A later thirteen-sheet set dated May 7, 1975 includes foundation plans, interior finishes, plumbing schedule, upper-floor plan, roof framing, interior elevations, wall sections, fireplace-and-pool details, living-room seating details, mechanical systems, HVAC, plumbing, and electrical drawings. This unusually complete documentary record demonstrates that the visual complexity of the house resulted from deliberate and sustained architectural development.

For purposes of this description, Goff's own directional terminology is used wherever possible. His construction drawings identify principal elevations as East, Southwest, Northeast, and Northwest, reflecting the diagonal orientation of the building rather than a conventional north-south rectangular plan. Where the Pima County nomination format calls for north, south, east, and west elevations, these should be understood as generalized directional references to a building whose principal faces are oblique.



Fig. 2. Site Map, Celestine Barby II House on the original lot.

Setting

The Barby House is situated within the Catalina Foothills, on a naturally sloping ridge site within Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3. The architecture responds directly to the topography rather than establishing a level suburban platform detached from the land. Goff's archival material includes a plot plan, plot-plan overlays, site-slope calculations, foundation plans, and section studies, indicating that the relationship between the house and slope was an integral design problem from the beginning.

The site retains a strong Sonoran Desert character. Contemporary views show exposed earth and rock, desert gravel, natural and cultivated desert vegetation, mature trees, agaves, prickly pear, barrel cactus, columnar cactus, yucca-like plants, and low shrubs surrounding the residence. The ground surface remains visually irregular and topographically expressive. Winding walks and narrow paved paths move through this vegetation and between retaining walls, terraces, and exterior living areas.

The house is approached through the landscape rather than presented as an isolated façade on a conventional front yard. Vegetation partially screens different portions of the building, allowing the roof edges, balconies, masonry projections, and taller elements to appear incrementally. From more distant viewpoints, the low horizontal roof is visible above the brush, while the tan brick walls visually merge with the earth tones of the foothills. Contemporary photographs looking toward the residence across native vegetation show how the building rises above the slope but remains partially embedded within the desert landscape.

The siting is inseparable from the building's geometry. The site is on the nose of a ridge, commands a northward view toward Pima Canyon and a broad southern panorama over the Tucson Basin. Goff used the 120-degree plan to expand rather than concentrate these views. One wing points generally eastward toward the Rincon Mountains; the other extends westward toward the Tucson Mountains and Wasson Peak. At the interior angle of the two wings, a tall narrow opening frames the view toward Pima Canyon. The surrounding landscape is not background scenery but one of the organizing elements of the plan.

The site contains a series of outdoor spaces that mediate between the masonry building and natural slope. These include balconies, paved terraces, masonry landscape walls, exterior walks, planting areas, and a pool courtyard. Some low walls repeat the brick of the residence and step downward with the land, extending the building's architectural vocabulary into the landscape. The distinction between architectural wall, retaining wall, terrace edge, and landscape enclosure is often intentionally ambiguous.

Mature vegetation is substantially denser today than in photographs made soon after completion. The 1978 Arizona Daily Star photographs show a more open desert site in which larger portions of the house and its stepped masonry were visible from a distance. The present vegetation screens portions of the lower walls, but the original ridge-top relationship, sloping

terrain, principal distant vistas, and fundamental relationship of architecture to desert setting remain readily legible.

Overall Form, Massing, and Geometry

The building does not have a conventional primary rectangular mass. Its composition develops from two linear wings creating a broad, open V-like configuration. The junction serves as the principal spatial hinge of the house. From this point the architecture extends outward in two directions, creating an interior sequence that is simultaneously elongated and angular.

The wings are not perceived simply as two bars. Differences in floor elevation, masonry projections, balcony elements, garage and service volumes, ramps, and the changing profile of the roof create a layered massing. The house is commonly described as two stories, but its spatial experience is more complex than a conventional two-story arrangement because internal floors step and terrace through the principal volume. The interior remains open from the floor to the rafters, with ramps connecting changing levels.

The broad roof visually consolidates this irregular organization. From many exterior viewpoints, the building reads first as a strong hovering roof plane and only secondarily as an accumulation of individual rooms. The roof extends significantly beyond the masonry walls, producing deep shade. At the ends and corners, it turns upward into exaggerated pointed projections. The long fascia and lifted tips give the roof a taut, wing-like profile, while the clerestory zone beneath allows daylight to penetrate between roof and masonry.

Below the roof, the brick walls alternate between long planar surfaces and highly articulated stepped edges. Masonry corners are frequently corbelled outward or inward course by course. The effect is especially conspicuous around recessed windows and balcony openings, where conventional rectangular voids become irregular geometric apertures.

This combination of heavy masonry and a visually floating roof is one of the building's most persistent exterior characteristics. The walls appear grounded, thick, and defensive, while the roof appears to lift and extend beyond them. The resulting tension gives the exterior a fortified quality without producing a closed interior.



Fig 3. Celestine Barby II House, west elevation, Photo by GM Vargas 2025

Southwest Elevation

The southwest elevation is one of the principal elevations specifically identified in Goff's design and working drawings. The archival record includes multiple preliminary southwest elevations followed by a final design, demonstrating that Goff repeatedly revised this face during design development.

In its final and present form this side of the building is characterized by an extended horizontal masonry wall punctuated by tall, narrow vertical openings beneath the broad roof plane. The windows are proportionally much taller than they are wide. Rather than using continuous glass walls to obtain the panoramic view, Goff created relatively narrow openings separated by substantial masonry piers. This preserves extensive uninterrupted wall area inside the residence while allowing carefully framed views outward.

The wall terminates in places with stepped masonry edges. Individual brick courses project progressively, creating corbelled transitions from solid wall to opening. These stepped profiles produce strong patterns of sunlight and shadow, particularly where the masonry is exposed beneath the roof overhang.

A continuous or intermittent clerestory condition occurs near the top of the wall. The masonry stops below the roof structure, allowing narrow areas of glazing to occupy the space between

wall and roof. The exposed roof framing passes across or adjacent to these glazed areas. From the interior, this permits daylight to enter at the roof line; from the exterior, it reinforces the visual impression that the broad roof is separated from and hovering above the walls.

There is a strong relationship between this elevation and the pool courtyard. The wall forms a backdrop to the pool, spa, paved terrace, planting beds, and mature pine trees. Narrow windows are reflected in the water, while masonry landscape walls define edges and changes in grade.

A small raised roof element or vent/chimney-like termination emerges above the otherwise low roof plane near the central portion of the building. Its compact pyramidal form contrasts with the long horizontality of the primary roof.



Fig. 4 Celestine Barby II House, north east elevation and main entry, Photo by GM Vargas 2025

Northeast Elevation (Generalized North Elevation)

The northeast elevation is also documented in the working drawings and is best understood as one of the building's more complex compositions because it participates directly in the ridge-top relationship and includes balcony, masonry, and service elements. The main entrance door sits at the center hinge of the two wings. (Fig 4.)

This elevation exhibits the characteristic contrast between the heavy brick base and deeply projecting roof. The masonry is highly articulated, with projecting walls, stepped corners, recessed openings, and upper-level balcony elements layered vertically. A particularly recognizable portion of the elevation includes a lower garage or service volume with a balcony above. Later added decorative metal double doors with an abstract organic or vegetal motif, flanked by massive stepped brick walls. Above, a balcony projects or recedes within the larger composition beneath the roof.

The balcony is framed by masonry walls that rise in stepped profiles rather than terminating vertically. Projecting wood elements extend laterally from the masonry, further breaking down the distinction between wall and canopy. The balcony railing is metal and visually light in contrast with the surrounding brick.

The upper level is sheltered beneath the broad roof, whose edges turn upward at the corners. In frontal views, these lifted ends give the roof a shallow concave profile. A striped fabric awning presently shades a central upper opening on this side. This awning should be identified as a later or secondary shade feature unless archival or historic photographic evidence establishes it within the period of significance.

Vegetation now partially obscures portions of the lower elevation. Saguaros, prickly pear, shrubs, palo-verde or mesquite-like trees, and other desert vegetation surround the masonry, leaving the roof and balcony more visible from a distance than the building base.

The elevation's monumental quality derives less from overall size than from its deliberate manipulation of scale. Thick walls and deep recesses make openings appear small and protected; the roof, by contrast, extends well beyond the enclosure. The result is an elevation that appears simultaneously massive and open to the landscape.



Fig. 5 Celestine Barby II House, Photo by GM Vargas 2025

East Elevation

The completed elevation is strongly horizontal. A long exposed brick wall lies below the thin projecting roof plane. The roof extends beyond the building at each end and rises gently toward its outer tips. A narrow clerestory zone beneath the roof exposes portions of the roof framing and allows a band of light between roof and wall.

Tall, narrow windows puncture the brick wall at intervals. The windows are deeply set and appear as vertical incisions within a largely solid masonry surface. This pattern is one of the most important recurring elements of the exterior. The windows provide directional views and admit natural light without sacrificing the broad interior wall surfaces Barby required for display of her art.

Near the principal entrance, the masonry becomes increasingly sculptural. Brick jambs are cut back incrementally in stepped courses, creating a geometric opening around the door and adjacent glass. One current photograph shows a glass entrance door set within a wall whose brickwork forms irregular stepped shoulders. Warm interior illumination reveals the colorful ceiling and furnishings beyond, making the entry opening appear almost cut out of the masonry. This portion of the house demonstrates that the stepped brickwork is not merely applied ornament. The geometry physically shapes wall edges, openings, transitions, and shadows. A close contemporary view shows the bricks themselves projecting into the opening course by course, with glazing placed behind or among these irregular edges.

The approach to this entrance crosses the natural slope by means of exterior steps and paved walks. Metal handrails accompany portions of this circulation. A secondary garage door occupies a lower service volume on an adjacent portion of the elevation. A dusk photograph shows the relationship among entry steps, tall openings, brick wall, lower garage, and broad roof.



Fig. 6 Celestine Barby II House, northeast elevation, Photo by GM Vargas 2025

Northwest Elevation (Generalized West Elevation)

This side is among the more topographically complex portions of the building. The ground falls away from portions of the house, exposing changes in floor level and allowing the same structure to appear relatively low from one viewpoint and substantially taller from another. The stepped masonry responds to this changing grade. The garage is on the lower level with a large masonry rectilinear mass above that creates a tower like form.

Walls project into the landscape as terraces and partial enclosures. Stepped brick ends extend beyond the primary enclosed volume and help define outdoor areas. In contemporary photographs, these masonry projections visually merge with low site walls, making it difficult to identify a single sharp boundary between house and landscape architecture.

The roof continues across the elevation as a broad, shallow plane. Its pointed or uplifted outer end is especially visible from low-angle viewpoints. A balcony or exterior platform projects toward the surrounding landscape. Its railing is thin and open, permitting views through to the vegetation and distant landscape. Horizontal wood elements extend beyond supporting masonry walls, creating another layer of projection. At the corners, Goff uses corbelled masonry to erode the conventional rectangular edge of the wall. Brick courses withdraw incrementally, exposing portions of the structural and glazed zone behind. Contemporary close views clearly document this condition.

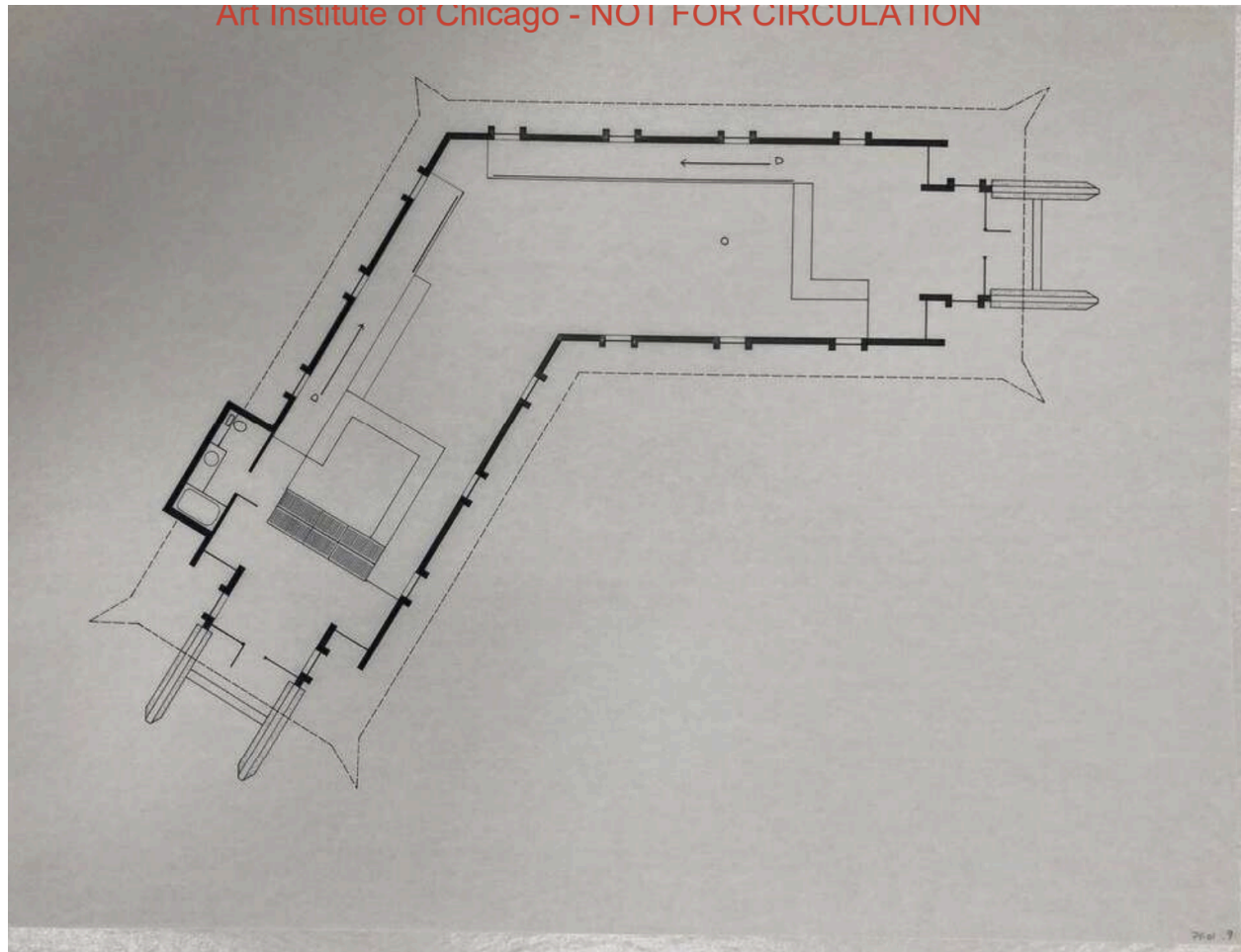


Fig. 7. Celestine Barby II House, Plan drawings, Art Institute of Chicago

Plan and Geometry

This geometry is fundamental rather than decorative. It determines the orientation of the wings, the shape of the main interior, the disposition of exterior spaces, and the relationship of the residence to the ridge and views.

The archival record demonstrates extensive study of the plan. Goff produced presentation plans, lower- and upper-level plans, numerous plan studies, overlays, annotated plans, and

preliminary working drawings. The later construction documentation includes separate first- and second-floor plans as well as slab, foundation, framing, mechanical, and electrical plans. This iterative record is significant because the executed house cannot be understood as a simple diagram enlarged into construction. Its irregular geometry was repeatedly tested against topography, structure, program, circulation, environmental systems, and views.

The two wings converge at a central hinge. Rather than placing an enclosed circulation core at this junction, Goff opened the interior so that the angled relationship remains perceptible. The house therefore contains long diagonal sight lines that extend across several functional zones.

Circulation is distributed through ramps, short changes in floor level, broad landings, and limited stairs rather than by a conventional central stair hall. Barby reportedly anticipated remaining in the house into advanced age and wished to avoid reliance on stairs. The ramps perform an architectural role. Because rooms occupy slightly different elevations, movement through the house produces changing views across and down into adjacent spaces. A person moving along the raised perimeter circulation overlooks the lower living area, suspended fireplace, furnishings, and opposite masonry wall while simultaneously seeing the patterned roof above. Consequently, section and plan are inseparable.

Private and service spaces occupy more contained zones within the wings, but even these are integrated into the broader structural geometry. Built-in storage is inserted within wall thicknesses, below counters, and alongside circulation, reducing the need for freestanding storage objects. The plan preserves substantial wall surfaces for the display of art. Instead of broad horizontal picture windows characteristic of many postwar houses, Goff generally employed narrower vertical windows. These frame discrete portions of the landscape while leaving large brick fields available for paintings.

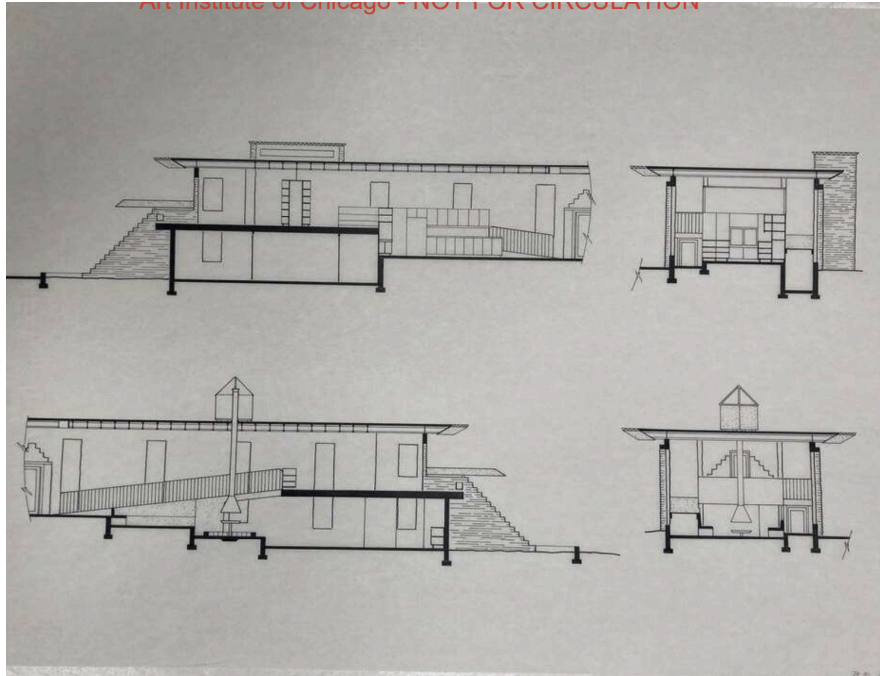


Fig. 8. Celestine Barby II House, Elevation drawings, Art Institute of Chicago

Interior Features

The principal interior is an expansive, multi-level volume characterized by exposed masonry, visible roof framing, ramps, built-in cabinetry, sculptural lighting, and carefully controlled natural light. Its spatial effect depends less on conventional room enclosure than on level, direction, material, furniture, and partial-height boundaries.

The living area is located within a depressed or lower portion of the central volume. A large suspended black metal fireplace occupies a central position and descends vertically from the roof structure toward the hearth.



Fig. 9. Celestine Barby II House, Living Room, Photo by GM Vargas 2025

Historic photographs show that the floor or hearth zone surrounding the fireplace originally contained a dramatic radial composition, with contrasting wedges radiating from a central circular area. The 1978 newspaper feature prominently illustrated this patterned floor as one of the most visually distinctive elements of the interior. Although subsequent floor finishes have changed, the depressed living area and fireplace remain, preserving the fundamental spatial organization.

Raised circulation zones flank and overlook the lower living space. Thin metal railings provide protection without visually enclosing the volume. Historically, portions of these railings were painted an intense pink or related bright color. Later redecoration changed some of the railing finish to black, but their form and function survive.

The interior masonry is generally left exposed. The warm buff or tan brick used outside continues inside, dissolving the conventional distinction between exterior façade and interior finish. Vertical brick soldier courses occur at selected wall tops and openings, while stepped masonry appears at windows and transitions.

Tall window openings extend upward toward the clerestory and roof. At selected openings the brick courses project into the void from opposing sides, producing jagged or stepped jambs. Glass is set behind these irregular masonry edges, allowing the exterior vegetation to be seen through openings that read almost as abstract geometric cuts in the brick wall. A current photograph documents this direct relationship between deeply articulated masonry and landscape beyond.



Fig. 10 Celestine Barby II House, Kitchen, Photo by GM Vargas 2025

The kitchen is integrated into the main open volume but is defined by cabinetry and partial-height construction rather than by complete walls. Extensive built-in cabinets use flakeboard or chipboard as a visible finish. Rather than concealing this inexpensive industrial material beneath veneer or paint, Goff exploited its mottled surface as a decorative field. Cabinetry forms counters, storage walls, islands, and partial visual screens. This cabinetry survive. The kitchen remains visually connected to the living spaces and to the continuous painted roof structure above.

Storage was incorporated throughout the house. Accounts noted that Barby had found storage inadequate in her earlier Goff residence and that the Tucson commission addressed this problem through cabinets, closets, and storage areas integrated into the architecture. The resulting cabinetry should therefore be understood not simply as kitchen equipment but as a component of the interior planning.



Fig. 11 Celestine Barby II House, Roof Structure, Clerestory, and Stenciled Beams, Photo by GM Vargas 2025

Roof Structure and Painted Beams

The most visually distinctive interior feature is the exposed roof system. Dark painted wood beams span the interior beneath exposed wood-composite roof decking. Rather than allowing these members to remain purely structural, Goff transformed them into a repeating ornamental field. Each beam bears a multicolored geometric stencil in turquoise, violet, purple, orange and silver. The motifs repeat rhythmically along the beams, creating a continuous visual pattern across the ceiling.



Fig. 12 Celestine Barby II House, Stencil Detail drawings, Art Institute of Chicago

This treatment is original to the architectural design. The Art Institute preserves a dedicated half-scale drawing identified as “Design for Stenciled Beams Celestine Barby House Tucson Arizona,” executed in graphite and colored pencil. The surviving ceiling therefore constitutes an unusually direct realization of a documented Goff ornamental design.

Brightly colored pink diagonal braces intersect the darker beams. The agenta-pink, sharply contrasting with the turquoise and purple stencil pattern and brown decking. The roof structure does not terminate visually at the masonry walls. Clerestory glazing between the top of the brick and the underside of the roof allows the beam system to remain perceptible at the building perimeter. In places, exterior light illuminates the ends and sides of the patterned members. This detail makes the ceiling appear as a continuous canopy laid across the entire house rather than as individual ceilings belonging to discrete rooms.

The large sculptural chandelier within the principal public space adds another layer to this ceiling composition. Numerous exposed globes are held within dark, curved or folded metal shades arranged on branching arms. Smaller related wall fixtures occur on the brick surfaces. Historic photographs indicate that this lighting vocabulary was established early in the life of the house.

Exterior Site and Landscape Features

The designed site contains a series of architectural elements extending outward from the house, including walks, steps, terraces, low brick walls, balcony structures, planting enclosures, and the pool area. Paths approach the building indirectly. Rather than creating a singular axial sidewalk, circulation follows the contours of the site and passes between landscape walls and vegetation. Some paved paths are edged in brick or bounded by stone-filled planting areas.

Low brick walls repeat the material of the residence. Several terminate in the same stepped profile found on the house itself, extending Goff’s geometric vocabulary into the landscape. In places these walls retain grade; elsewhere they define terraces or create semi-enclosed outdoor rooms.

The pool courtyard forms the most substantial exterior living area. The later added, present pool is irregular in shape and includes a raised polygonal spa. Stone or masonry coping, paved deck surfaces, steps, low walls, mature trees, shrubs, and a chiminea-like freestanding outdoor fireplace occupy the surrounding courtyard.

The landscape has matured significantly since completion. Trees and large shrubs now conceal portions of the lower elevations. Nevertheless, the present setting retains the essential qualities visible in the early documentation: desert vegetation, irregular terrain, exposed rock and gravel, dramatic mountain and basin views, and the perception of the residence as a building embedded within rather than imposed upon the foothills.

Alterations

The Barby House retains its principal architectural form and a substantial quantity of original fabric, but it has experienced changes in finish, color, landscape, and selected exterior components since completion. These alterations need to be distinguished carefully from the surviving elements of Goff's original design.

The earliest clearly documented changes occurred by the early 1980s. Contemporary reporting described a program of minor redecoration rather than structural remodeling. The original or early highly patterned carpeting was replaced with a more neutral beige carpet; railings that had originally been painted a vivid pink were repainted black; and deteriorated orange material applied beneath or around portions of the balcony/eave was removed and replaced with plywood. These changes affected the color palette and surface treatment but not the principal spatial or structural organization of the building.

Floor finishes have subsequently changed again. There is wood flooring across substantial portions of the upper and perimeter living areas. The dramatic radial floor treatment visible around the fireplace in the 1978 photographs is no longer present as originally executed. The underlying sunken living area, level changes, circulation routes, and fireplace position nevertheless remain readily identifiable.

The principal masonry construction appears substantially intact. The stepped brick openings, masonry piers, wall planes, corbelled edges, and major exterior volumes remain legible.

The broad roof retains its characteristic horizontal form, lifted outer corners, projecting structure, and clerestory relationship to the wall system. Localized roofing, fascia, flashing, drainage, and maintenance work is visible but these interventions have not materially altered the defining roof silhouette.

The painted and stenciled roof beams survive to an exceptional degree. The geometric stencil pattern remains visible across the principal interior roof structure, as do the contrasting bright braces. The principal suspended fireplace also survives, although the treatment of the hearth and surrounding flooring has changed.

Substantial portions of the flakeboard cabinetry and partial-height interior construction remain in place. Appliances and individual kitchen components have been replaced over time, as would be expected in a continually occupied residence, but the major cabinetry masses and open relationship between kitchen and public spaces remain legible.

Later exterior shade devices are present, most conspicuously the striped awning associated with one upper balcony or window area. The pool was added in the 21st century.

Exterior steps and handrails associated with access from the drive and lower grade include elements that may represent later safety or accessibility improvements.

Overall, the documented alterations are concentrated principally in finish materials, color, floor surfaces, shade devices, landscape maturation, pool-area evolution, and routine building maintenance. The defining architectural characteristics remain plainly visible: the 120-degree two-wing configuration; relationship to the ridge; broad uplifted roof; exposed roof structure; clerestory glazing; buff brick walls; stepped and corbelled masonry; tall narrow openings; balconies; terraced interior; ramps and railings; suspended fireplace; integrated cabinetry; and the original Goff-designed beam decoration. The more formal assessment of how these alterations affect the seven aspects of historic integrity should be reserved for the separate Integrity section of the nomination rather than resolved within the descriptive narrative.

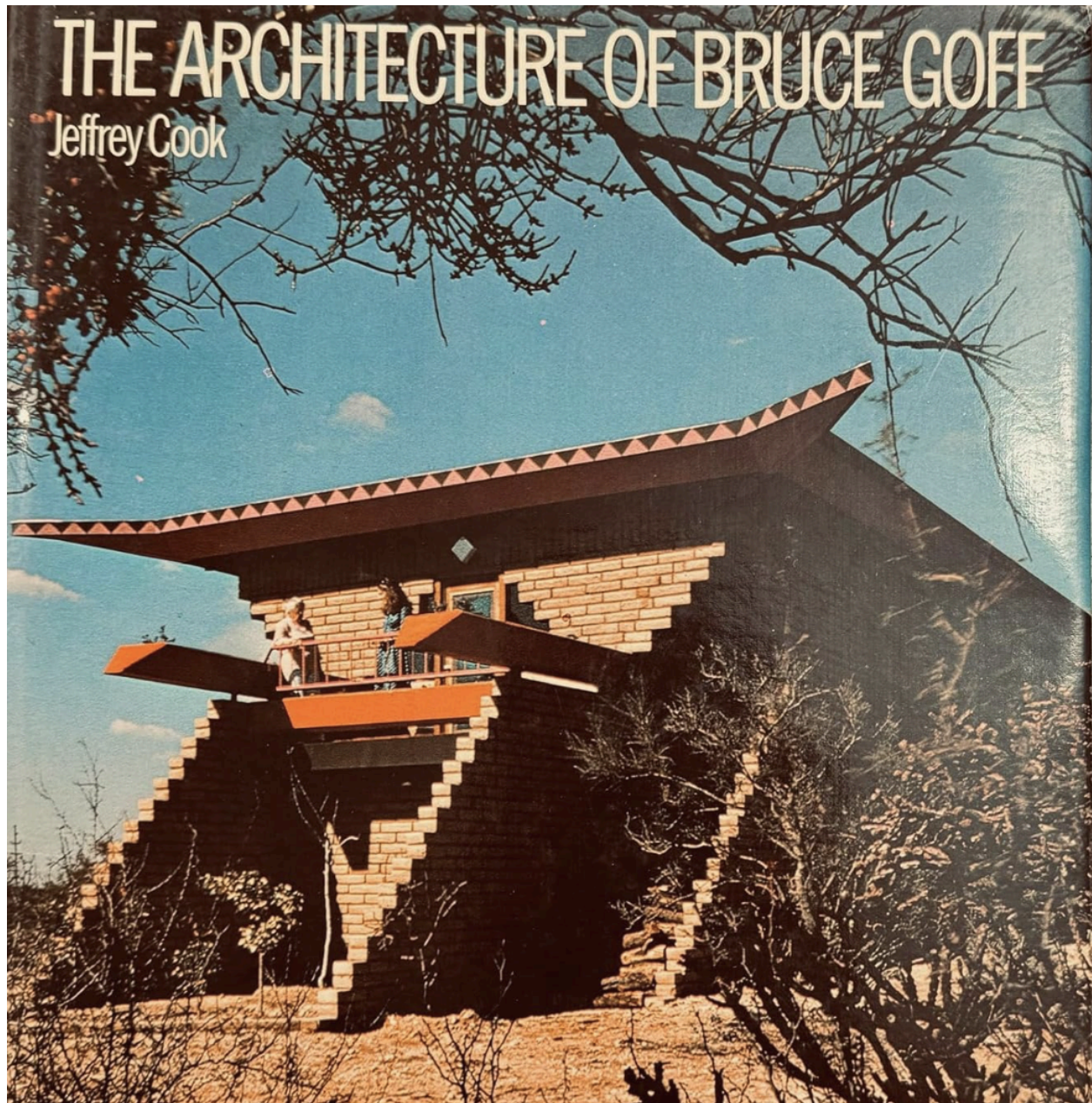


Fig 13. Celestine Barby II House, Featured on the cover of The Architecture of Bruce Goff.

Statement of Significance

Historic Context: The Greater Catalina Foothills

The Celestine Barby II House was constructed within a landscape that had already acquired a distinct architectural and cultural identity by the 1970s. The Catalina Foothills, extending north of Tucson toward the base of the Santa Catalina Mountains, developed during the twentieth century as one of the city's principal areas for low-density high-end residential expansion. From the beginning, the area's appeal was tied to topography, climate, mountain views, open desert, privacy, and the possibility of creating architecture that responded directly to an unusually

dramatic natural setting. By the time Bruce Goff designed the Barby House in 1974, the Foothills had evolved through several generations of development, from large-acreage estates and revival-style residences to increasingly diverse expressions of postwar and late-modern desert architecture.

The area north of Tucson had long been understood as distinct from the denser urbanized valley floor. The slopes and ridges below the Santa Catalina Mountains offered higher elevations, cooler nighttime temperatures, cleaner air, broad views across the Tucson Basin, and a landscape dominated by native Sonoran Desert vegetation. Twentieth-century developers transformed these environmental characteristics into a residential ideal. Rather than extending Tucson's conventional street grid uniformly across the foothills, early developments frequently used large irregular parcels and roads fitted to existing contours. Houses were often separated from one another by substantial areas of desert, and the surrounding terrain was treated as an essential component of residential character rather than as land to be fully graded and landscaped.

This development pattern was particularly important because it encouraged the emergence of a form of residential architecture distinct from the more conventional suburban development occurring elsewhere in Tucson. In the Foothills, the siting of a house could be as important as its façade. View, grade, solar orientation, existing vegetation, washes, ridgelines, and rock formations shaped the way architects approached individual commissions. These environmental concerns eventually became fundamental to the regional modern architecture that flourished in Tucson after World War II.

Early Development of the Catalina Foothills

The planned development of the Catalina Foothills is most closely associated with John W. and Helen Murphey, whose residential projects beginning in the 1920s and 1930s helped establish the architectural and planning principles that would influence subsequent foothills development. During the 1920s the Murpheys undertook a series of projects intended to attract affluent residents to Tucson and to capitalize on the region's growing national reputation as a healthful desert destination. In 1927 they brought Swiss-born architect Josias Thomas Joesler to Tucson. By the mid-1930s, the Murpheys and Joesler were developing the Santa Catalina Foothills Estates, designing large houses in carefully selected locations and using refined versions of regional revival styles.

The Murphey-Joesler development model established several characteristics that became enduring features of the Foothills. Instead of subdividing the land into tightly packed urban lots, they envisioned substantial residential sites dispersed across the desert landscape. National Register documentation describing Joesler's work in the Catalina Foothills notes that homesites were selected to take optimum advantage of views while preserving as much of the natural desert landscape as possible. The houses were generally larger and more responsive to topography than conventional period-style houses constructed within Tucson proper.

This combination of architecture and landscape was deliberate. The foothills were marketed as a place where the natural desert itself was a luxury. Native vegetation, mountain panoramas, distance from urban congestion, elevation above the valley floor, and separation between houses became part of the residential product. Contemporary promotion of Foothills development also invoked the idea of a relatively “dust-free thermal belt,” emphasizing climatic advantages and cleaner air compared with lower parts of the valley.

The development therefore differed from contemporary suburbanization in an important way. While much American suburban growth depended upon grading, standardized lots, repetitive housing, and the replacement of existing landscape with lawns and street trees, the most influential early Catalina Foothills developments cultivated an image of selective occupation of the desert. Roads followed the terrain, parcels were comparatively large, and the most successful houses appeared to occupy specific pieces of land rather than interchangeable lots. The architectural work of Joesler gave physical form to this ideal. His residences in the Foothills drew from Spanish Colonial, Mediterranean, Pueblo, Territorial, and other regional precedents, but their relationship to land frequently mattered as much as stylistic vocabulary. Courtyards, patios, breezeways, shaded openings, thick walls, low horizontal masses, and careful orientation provided climatic function while reinforcing the image of desert living. Joesler and Murphey ultimately collaborated on hundreds of projects, many located in the Catalina Foothills and Tucson Country Club Estates.

The establishment of St. Philip’s in the Hills and associated development near the entrance to the Foothills reinforced the area’s identity as a planned residential environment distinct from central Tucson. Joesler’s architectural work there and elsewhere in the Murphey developments helped create a recognizable threshold between the urban valley and the increasingly exclusive residential landscape beyond.

The Foothills as a Cultural Landscape

By the 1930s and 1940s, the Catalina Foothills had become more than a collection of subdivisions. It had developed a strong cultural identity associated with artists, writers, professionals, seasonal residents, and affluent households attracted to desert scenery and privacy.

The Foothills also became an artistic subject in its own right. American regionalist painter Dale Nichols, who moved from Chicago to Tucson around 1940, painted the lower Catalina landscape, and contemporary newspaper coverage described imagery of riders moving among saguaros and greasewood against the mountains. Such representations helped establish the lower Catalinas as a distinctive cultural landscape, simultaneously inhabited and still perceived as desert wilderness.

This cultural framing is important to understanding later architecture. By the postwar period, clients building in the Catalina Foothills did not simply expect a suburban house. They

increasingly expected a building that acknowledged the desert, framed the mountains, took advantage of elevation, and preserved some sense of separation from the city below.

Postwar Expansion

After World War II, Tucson entered an era of rapid metropolitan growth. Population expansion, automobile ownership, military and defense activity, tourism, university growth, and new household formation pushed residential development well beyond the older urban core. The Catalina Foothills participated in this growth but retained a development pattern distinct from many tract-house subdivisions emerging elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

New roads and automobile access made more remote foothills sites practical for year-round residence. The area increasingly shifted from a landscape of occasional estates and seasonal properties toward a continuously inhabited suburban district. At the same time, the availability of larger parcels and dramatic sites attracted architects interested in designing individualized houses rather than standardized models.

By the 1950s, Tucson newspapers were actively promoting the foothills and adjacent northern suburban areas as desirable locations for new residential construction. A 1955 Tucson Daily Citizen page carrying the headline “Foothills Invite Home Building” presented an image of modern indoor-outdoor domestic life organized around glass walls, patios, and a swimming pool. The imagery reflected a broader transformation in the architectural culture of Tucson: the desert home no longer needed to be represented solely through revival architecture. Modern construction could also claim the foothills landscape.

This transition did not erase the earlier Murphey-Joesler legacy. Instead, it preserved many of the same fundamental planning values while opening them to different architectural expressions. Large lots, view orientation, retention of native vegetation, deep shade, patios, outdoor living areas, and an intimate relationship with topography continued to define successful Foothills architecture even as architects rejected traditional stylistic forms.

The postwar Foothills thus became a testing ground for architectural regionalism. The basic environmental problem remained constant: how should a house inhabit an exposed desert hillside characterized by intense sun, large temperature swings, dramatic views, steep grades, and fragile native vegetation? Modern architects answered that problem in markedly different ways, producing houses constructed of brick, concrete block, poured concrete, stone, glass, wood, and steel while retaining a common emphasis on landscape response.

From Revivalism to Regional Modernism

The architectural transformation of the Catalina Foothills is best understood not as a clean break between “traditional” and “modern” architecture but as an evolution in methods of responding to place.

Joesler's early work had already established the importance of site, massing, shade, courtyards, and environmental adaptation. After World War II, Tucson architects increasingly stripped away explicit historical imagery while retaining these underlying regional principles. Broad roof overhangs replaced tiled arcades; exposed concrete or brick replaced stuccoed revival walls; large and carefully placed glazed openings framed mountain views; and courtyards, terraces, and shaded exterior rooms continued to mediate between interior and desert.



Fig 14. Catalina Foothills Estate, Post WWII Promotional Poster, Cabat-Gill Collection, THPF

This development became one of the defining characteristics of Tucson's Modern Movement. Architects working in Southern Arizona recognized that a direct transplantation of International Style imagery was often poorly suited to the Sonoran Desert. Instead, modern design was increasingly modified through deep shade, thermal mass, controlled glazing, orientation, rugged materials, and close attention to the existing site.

The Catalina Foothills provided unusually favorable conditions for this architectural experimentation. Large parcels reduced pressure for standardized plans. Irregular terrain discouraged repetitive siting. Affluent clients could commission individual architects. Dramatic landscapes encouraged houses organized around particular views rather than conventional

street-facing façades. As a result, the area accumulated an unusually rich collection of individualized twentieth-century residential architecture.

By the 1960s and early 1970s, the Foothills contained multiple generations of this regional design culture: Joesler revival houses and estates, postwar ranch houses, increasingly abstract modern residences, and highly site-specific architect-designed houses. This architectural pluralism is critical to the context of the Barby House. Goff's work did not enter a landscape without precedent. He encountered an area where architectural individuality, landscape preservation, view orientation, and site-responsive planning had been cultivated for nearly four decades.

Landscape Preservation and Architectural Control

As Foothills development intensified, subdivision covenants and architectural controls became important tools for maintaining low-density character and regulating the relationship between buildings and landscape.



Fig 15. Vista de las Candelas Estates, Promotional Brochure, Herb Greif Collection, THPF

The surviving materials for Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3, where the Barby House stands, illustrate this broader pattern. Recorded in 1963, the subdivision's covenants addressed retention of native vegetation and architectural review. They specifically concerned the preservation of cacti and palo verde except where removal was necessary for construction and provided for review of building plans, exterior colors, walls, fences, and later alterations.

These controls reflected values already associated with earlier foothills development: buildings were expected to coexist visually with the desert landscape rather than overwhelm it. "Compatibility" did not necessarily require identical architectural styles. Instead, scale, color, siting, vegetation, and relationship to terrain could provide continuity among otherwise highly individualized buildings.

This distinction becomes particularly important in the 1960s and 1970s. The greater Catalina Foothills increasingly included houses that were stylistically dissimilar but shared a common landscape ethic. A territorial revival residence, a masonry ranch house, and a late-modern architect-designed house might have little formal resemblance, yet each could employ low profiles, earth-toned materials, protected outdoor areas, retained vegetation, and careful view orientation.

The Barby House belongs squarely within this later phase of Foothills development.

Architecture and the Foothills Site

The physical geography of the Catalina Foothills imposed constraints that became architectural opportunities. The land rises progressively from the Tucson Basin toward the Santa Catalina Mountains. Instead of a continuous flat terrace, the area is composed of ridges, shallow valleys, washes, rocky outcroppings, and inclined slopes. Residential construction could therefore require substantial decisions about grading, retaining walls, foundation placement, drainage, access, and orientation.

Houses on ridge sites faced an especially complex design problem. They could obtain panoramic views in multiple directions, but they were also highly exposed to sun, wind, and visual prominence. Poorly handled construction could require extensive grading or create buildings that appeared perched unnaturally above the landscape. The most accomplished Foothills houses responded by distributing their mass along contours, stepping floor levels, preserving slopes, and using walls and terraces to mediate between architecture and land. Goff's documentation for the Barby House demonstrates that these concerns were central to his work on Lot 99. The project archive includes a plot plan, plot-plan study with overlay, site-slope calculations, framing studies, wall sections, engineering calculations, and successive foundation and floor plans. The house's eventual 120-degree organization can therefore be understood as a direct architectural response to a particular ridge rather than an arbitrary geometric exercise. The site offered long-distance views in several directions. The ridge provides a northward relationship with Pima Canyon, a broad southern panorama across the Tucson Basin, eastern

views toward the Rincon Mountains, and western views toward Wasson Peak and the Tucson Mountains. Instead of choosing one dominant prospect, Goff opened the house across this larger geographic field. In that respect, the Barby House extends one of the oldest principles of Catalina Foothills residential planning: the house is placed in response to the view and the land rather than the lot line alone.

The 1960s and 1970s Foothills

The decades immediately preceding construction of the Barby House represented a period of both maturation and transformation in the Catalina Foothills.

By the 1960s, residential development had spread across a much larger portion of the slopes north of River Road. New subdivisions divided former large holdings into residential parcels, yet many retained irregular streets, generous setbacks, desert vegetation, and low-density zoning. The cultural image of the Foothills had become firmly established: privacy, mountain scenery, architecturally ambitious homes, and a sense of separation from the denser city remained central to its identity.

At the same time, postwar architectural practice had become much more diverse. The romanticized regional revivalism of the prewar period remained influential, but it now existed alongside ranch houses and increasingly assertive modern architecture. Modern residences employed low horizontal forms, exposed masonry, deep overhangs, shaded courts, swimming pools, glass walls or carefully controlled openings, and plans shaped by irregular topography.

Affluent clients were also more willing to commission nationally or internationally connected architects. The Catalina Foothills had become a landscape in which experimental residential architecture was culturally plausible. This environment helps explain why Celestine Barby could commission Bruce Goff, an architect whose work was radically unlike conventional Tucson houses, without the resulting building being fundamentally incompatible with its setting. The compatibility rested not in stylistic similarity but in shared environmental priorities.

Contextual Significance

Within the larger history of the Catalina Foothills, the Celestine Barby II House represents the culmination of several long-running patterns of residential development. First, it reflects the Foothills tradition of individual architect-designed residences on environmentally distinctive sites. Second, it continues the planning principle established during early Foothills development that natural topography, native vegetation, and distant views should be incorporated into residential design rather than treated as obstacles to construction. Third, it demonstrates the architectural evolution of the Foothills from prewar regional revivalism into postwar and late-modern regional design. Finally, it documents the extent to which the Catalina Foothills had become, by the 1970s, a setting capable of supporting architecture of national significance. The commission of Bruce Goff was possible because the area had developed a long cultural tradition of individualized, ambitious residential design.

Where Goff departs dramatically from his predecessors is in the means by which he expresses those values. The established Foothills language of walls, shade, landscape, and view becomes in his hands an architecture of corbelled masonry, ramps, suspended elements, polychrome structure, angled wings, and an uplifted roof. The result is both unmistakably a Bruce Goff house and unmistakably a house conceived for the Catalina Foothills.



Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3

The Celestine Barby II House is located on Lot 99 of Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3, a residential subdivision in the Catalina Foothills of Pima County. The subdivision was recorded in 1963 as Map and Plat MP-17-006, within Section 6, Township 13 South, Range 14 East.

Surviving covenants for Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3 document an explicit concern with the relationship between residential construction and the surrounding desert environment. The restrictions addressed retention of native cacti and palo verde, except where removal was necessary for construction, and established review provisions for building plans, exterior colors, walls, fences, and later alterations. These provisions indicate that landscape preservation and visual compatibility were recognized elements of the subdivision's development framework.

Within the specific context of Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3, the significance of the Barby House lies in the relationship between a documented landscape-conscious subdivision framework and Goff's site-specific architectural response. The house does not appear to have been designed to imitate neighboring residences. Instead, Goff responded directly to the individual characteristics of Lot 99 through orientation, plan geometry, materials, views, and preservation of the surrounding desert setting.

The Barby House therefore should be understood as an exceptional architectural work located within, and specifically designed for, Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3. Its surviving relationship to the original lot, ridge, desert vegetation, and view corridors remains essential to understanding the building as designed.

Architecture of the Modern Movement in Tucson 1945 - 1975

Sarah Allaback's 2003 Essays on Modern Architecture, produced for the National Park Service, provides a useful national context for evaluating the architectural significance of twentieth-century Modernism. Allaback describes American Modernism not as a single architectural style, but as the product of several related and sometimes competing developments in architectural thought.

Allaback traces the emergence of modern architecture from nineteenth-century experimentation with historical styles and new building technologies to the dramatic break with architectural precedent that occurred during the early twentieth century. The arrival of European Modernism in the United States during the 1920s introduced the architecture subsequently identified as the International Style, characterized by an emphatic rejection of historical architectural forms and ornament.

At the same time, American Modernism developed through a separate but interconnected architectural lineage. Allaback emphasizes the importance of Frank Lloyd Wright, whose work was known to European architects before the International Style became established in the United States. Although Wright's architecture differed markedly from European Modernism, his

work demonstrated another means by which architecture could reject historical imitation and develop new relationships among plan, structure, materials, interior space, and site. As Allaback explains: "Different forms of modern architecture with very different sensibilities were able to develop side by side in America."

This distinction is particularly relevant to the architecture of Bruce Goff. Goff's work does not fit comfortably within the formal vocabulary of the International Style. His architecture instead belongs to the broader history of American architectural experimentation in which modern design could be individualistic, organic, materially expressive, ornamental, and responsive to a particular client and site.

By the 1950s, Modernism had moved from architectural experimentation into American popular culture. Allaback notes that postwar residential development introduced widely accessible versions of the "modern home," including picture windows, carports, split levels, open planning, and other features that transformed ordinary domestic architecture. At the same time, leading architects continued to test the conceptual limits of Modernism through increasingly experimental approaches to structure, enclosure, space, material, and the relationship between architecture and landscape.

Allaback ultimately places the importance of Modernism in this larger process of experimentation. She characterizes modern buildings as exemplifying "the search for the limits of building and design," including new interpretations of domestic comfort and new possibilities for architecture.

This national framework is useful in evaluating the Celestine Barby II House. The residence should not be evaluated according to how closely it resembles the canonical glass-and-steel architecture of the International Style. Instead, it belongs to the broader and more diverse development of American Modernism that occurred alongside it: an experimental tradition concerned with new spatial organizations, materials, construction techniques, relationships to landscape, and conceptions of domestic life.

The Celestine Barby II House was designed during the final years of a transformative period in Tucson architecture. Between the end of World War II and the mid-1970s, rapid population growth and suburban expansion fundamentally changed the city's built environment. Modern architecture became increasingly prominent in residential, commercial, institutional, educational, and religious construction.

Tucson architects adapted modern architectural ideas to the particular conditions of the Sonoran Desert. Shade, thermal mass, orientation, controlled glazing, courtyards, patios, deep roof projections, and relationships between interior and exterior space became important components of residential design. Brick, concrete block, stone, poured concrete, wood, steel, and glass were employed in buildings that ranged from relatively restrained post-and-beam houses to highly individualized residences.

This represented both a departure from and a continuation of earlier regional architecture. Spanish Colonial Revival, Pueblo Revival, and other Southwestern architectural traditions had already responded to climate through thick walls, shaded openings, courtyards, and protected exterior spaces. Postwar architects increasingly abandoned literal historical references while continuing to address many of the same environmental conditions through modern architectural forms.

The postwar period also fostered collaboration among Tucson architects, artists, craftspeople, furniture makers, and interior designers. Architecture could encompass furnishings, cabinetry, lighting, textiles, sculpture, and other decorative arts. Furniture designer John Willard Kelso, for example, produced modern furniture and built-in casework and collaborated with Tucson architects and designers including Arthur T. Brown and William Wilde, and Sylvia Wilde.

The Catalina Foothills offered particularly favorable conditions for individualized residential architecture. Irregular parcels, slopes, native desert vegetation, and extensive mountain and basin views encouraged houses designed in response to specific sites rather than standardized plans. By the 1960s and 1970s, the Foothills contained increasingly diverse examples of modern residential architecture.

Bruce Goff began the Celestine Barby II House in 1974, with working drawings continuing through 1975. The commission therefore belongs chronologically to the concluding years of Tucson's principal period of postwar Modernism.

The house shares important characteristics with Tucson's regional development of modern architecture. It responds directly to a desert site; employs masonry extensively as structure and finish; uses a broad projecting roof to create shade; controls the size and placement of openings; introduces daylight through clerestory glazing; connects interior and exterior living spaces; and organizes the building in relation to topography and distant views.

Goff, however, transformed these relatively familiar regional concerns through his own architectural vocabulary. Brick walls become stepped and corbelled around openings. A shading roof becomes an enormous expressive canopy with dramatically uplifted ends. Exposed structural members become surfaces for polychrome ornament. Changes in grade become an interior system of platforms and ramps.

The integration of art and architecture is particularly pronounced. Goff designed chairs, a dining table, built-in seating, and the polychrome decoration of the exposed roof structure specifically for the residence. The Art Institute archive preserves his half-scale design for the stenciled beams, directly connecting one of the house's most distinctive surviving decorative features to the architect's original conception.



Fig 17. Celestine Barby II House, Under Construction, Current Owner Johnson Collection

The Celestine Barby II House therefore occupies an unusual position within Tucson's Modern Movement. It is not representative of the most common form of postwar Tucson residence, nor should its significance depend upon being typical. Rather, it demonstrates the breadth of architectural experimentation possible in Tucson by the mid-1970s.

Seen within Allaback's broader national framework, the house also illustrates the diversity of American Modernism. Its rejection of historical architectural forms connects it to the larger modern movement, while its expressive structure, ornament, color, unconventional materials, individualized plan, and intense response to client and site distinguish it from the International Style. The Barby House represents a different trajectory of American Modernism, one in which experimentation rather than stylistic uniformity became the defining principle.

Bruce Goff: Architect, Teacher, and Designer (1904–1982)

Bruce Alonzo Goff (1904–1982) was an American architect whose career extended from the 1920s through the early 1980s. His work is distinguished by highly individualized designs developed in response to particular clients, sites, materials, and programs rather than through the repeated application of a recognizable architectural formula. The Celestine Barby II House was designed during the final decade of his career and reflects ideas Goff had developed over more than fifty years of architectural practice.

Goff was born in Alton, Kansas, in 1904 and grew up principally in Oklahoma. His architectural education was unconventional. At the age of twelve, he began working in the Tulsa office of Rush, Endacott & Rush, where he learned architecture through apprenticeship rather than formal university training. He studied architectural publications independently and became familiar with contemporary American and European design.



Fig. 18 A portrait of Goff taken in 1947, the year he joined OU's faculty. Bruce Goff portrait, Norman, OK, 1947. Bruce Goff Archive, Ryerson and Burnham Art and Architecture Archives, Art Institute of Chicago. Digital file #199001.Port_Goff1

Goff's early career coincided with Tulsa's rapid growth as an oil center. Working within an active architectural office gave him practical experience with drawing, construction, materials, and large commissions while he was still a teenager.

Among the most important projects associated with Goff's early career was the Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church South in Tulsa, completed in 1929. The building's vertical massing, geometric ornament, sculptural detailing, and integration of architecture and decorative design were dramatically removed from conventional historicist church architecture. The project established themes that would recur throughout Goff's career, particularly the integration of ornament with architectural form and his resistance to conventional stylistic categories.

Development of an Independent Modern Architecture

During the 1930s and 1940s, Goff continued to move away from conventional architectural practice. Rather than adopt the International Style as a fixed vocabulary, he experimented with geometry, structure, materials, color, ornament, and spatial organization.

This independence is important in understanding his later work. Goff did not develop a standardized "Goff style" that could simply be transferred from one commission to another. Individual projects could differ radically in appearance because their forms were developed around different sites, programs, clients, budgets, and materials.

This approach places Goff within the broader American Modern Movement described in the preceding section. Modern architecture in the United States included experimental traditions that developed alongside the International Style rather than exclusively through it. Goff's work represents one of the most individual manifestations of that alternative modern tradition.

A major period in Goff's career began when he joined the University of Oklahoma, becoming chairman of its School of Architecture in 1947. His teaching rejected the idea that students should reproduce the work of established masters or conform to a prescribed modern style. Under Goff, the architecture program became associated with what later became known as the American School of Architecture. Students were encouraged to develop individual architectural solutions based on program, site, structure, materials, and personal experimentation. Goff's educational work and architectural practice were closely connected. Many of the qualities encouraged in the school, including unconventional geometry, material experimentation, individualized design, and resistance to standardized solutions, were simultaneously being explored in his own buildings.

Residential commissions provided Goff with some of his greatest opportunities for experimentation. Houses allowed him to work directly with individual clients and to develop architecture around specific patterns of living.

Among the best-known examples is the Bavinger House near Norman, Oklahoma, completed in 1955. Its unconventional geometry, continuous spatial organization, suspended living areas, exposed structure, and integration with its site demonstrate the extent to which Goff had moved beyond conventional definitions of the postwar American house.

Other residential commissions similarly explored unusual geometries, expressive structural systems, inexpensive or unexpected materials, built-in furnishings, decorative surfaces, and highly individualized relationships between architecture and landscape.

These projects established an important precedent for the Barby House. By the time Celestine Barby commissioned her Tucson residence, Goff had spent decades treating the private house as a setting for architectural experimentation rather than as a standardized building type.

One of the defining characteristics of Goff's architecture was his willingness to use materials outside conventional architectural hierarchies. Industrial products and relatively inexpensive materials could be combined with highly crafted details and custom-designed elements. Material value was therefore not determined simply by expense. Texture, reflectivity, pattern, color, structural capability, and visual effect could make an ordinary material architecturally significant.

This approach is directly visible in the Barby House. Exposed masonry, wood framing, glass, flakeboard, carpet, paint, and other materials are combined within a carefully controlled composition. The extensive use of flakeboard for cabinetry and interior elements is particularly characteristic of Goff's willingness to elevate an inexpensive manufactured product through design.

Goff also rejected the assumption that Modernism required the elimination of ornament. In his architecture, decoration could be integral to structure and material rather than applied as historical embellishment. Pattern, color, geometry, and structure frequently operated together. The Barby House's painted roof beams are an especially important example. The Art Institute of Chicago archive contains Goff's dedicated half-scale "Design for Stenciled Beams Celestine Barby House Tucson Arizona," demonstrating that the polychrome geometric pattern was part of the architectural design rather than later decoration.

Goff's conception of architecture could extend beyond the building itself to furniture and interior design. This is particularly well documented for the Barby House.

The archival collection contains designs for chairs, a dining table, living-room seating, the fireplace, pool, and stenciled structural beams, in addition to conventional architectural drawings. The surviving documentation therefore demonstrates that Goff conceived major components of the interior as parts of the same design process as the house.

This integrated approach is essential to evaluating the Barby House. Its significance does not reside solely in the exterior form. Plan, structure, furniture, color, ornament, circulation, lighting, and interior spatial organization were developed as related parts of the commission.

Goff's Mature Architecture

By the 1960s and 1970s, Goff had developed an extensive body of work without settling into a single formal vocabulary. His mature buildings continued to explore unusual structural systems, dramatic roof forms, geometric plans, inexpensive and unconventional materials, reflective surfaces, color, ornament, and complex interior spaces.

This continuing experimentation distinguishes Goff's career from architects whose mature work became increasingly standardized. His later commissions could remain as formally inventive as his earlier buildings.

The Barby House belongs to this mature period. The archival record identifies the project as DeLong Job 74.01 and preserves presentation drawings, preliminary studies, working drawings, structural and engineering studies, specifications, furniture designs, and decorative designs dating principally from 1974 and 1975. The extent of this surviving documentation is important because it allows the house to be evaluated not merely as an attributed Goff design but as a thoroughly documented architectural commission.

The Celestine Barby II House brings together several themes present throughout Goff's career: individualized planning, unconventional geometry, expressive structure, integration of ornament and architecture, experimentation with ordinary materials, custom furnishings, and close attention to the client's particular requirements.

Its approximately 120-degree organization rejects the conventional rectangular domestic plan. Its exposed structural system is simultaneously functional and decorative. Masonry becomes sculptural through stepped and corbelled construction. Flakeboard becomes a prominent interior finish. Ramps organize movement through changing floor levels. Custom furniture and built-ins become part of the architecture. The residence is significant because it contains identifiable characteristics of his mature architectural practice and preserves substantial physical evidence of his approach to design.

The timing of the commission is also important. Designed beginning in 1974, the Barby House belongs to the later phase of Goff's career, after the major experimental houses and educational work through which he had established his national reputation. It demonstrates that the principles developed during those earlier decades remained active and continued to evolve in his later residential work.

The Barby House becomes still more important when considered in relation to Celestine Barby herself, because this was not Goff's first commission for her. Their architectural relationship extended for more than a decade and included an earlier completed residence in Beaver, Oklahoma, and a later unbuilt Colorado proposal before the Tucson commission.

Celestine “Lestie” Barby

Anna Celestine Pearson Barby (1903–2003), known to family and friends as “Lestie,” was an Oklahoma rancher, artist, collector, traveler, and community figure whose life extended across virtually the entire twentieth century.

Barby was born January 27, 1903, in Cordell, Oklahoma, the daughter of James and Louisa Pearson. When she was still very young, the family moved to Washtucna, Washington, where she lived with her parents, older brother James Rolland Pearson, and later her younger sister Marie. Her childhood was disrupted by her mother’s serious illness. Louisa Pearson returned to Oklahoma with the children, traveling by train to the home of relatives near Balko, in the Oklahoma Panhandle. Celestine later remembered that her mother placed identification tags around the children’s necks in case she died during the journey. The children were met in Liberal, Kansas, by their uncle John Lawson and taken by horse-drawn surrey to the Lawson farm.

Celestine was subsequently raised near Balko by her grandmother Priscilla Lawson and her uncles Green Berry Lawson and John Lawson. She attended local schools and was a member of the first graduating class of Balko High School. After high school, she spent a brief period in Tucson, Arizona, living with the family of her uncle John Lawson, who had relocated there. She maintained close relationships with her Lawson cousins.

Her sister Marie married Ralph Barby, through whom Celestine met Ralph’s brother Lloyd J. Barby, a widower with two children. Celestine and Lloyd married on April 26, 1931, at the Lawson home near Balko. They made their home on the Barby Ranch east of Beaver, Oklahoma.

Life on the ranch required substantial physical labor and domestic management. Family accounts describe Barby maintaining gardens, preserving produce, raising and butchering chickens, selling eggs and cream, sewing clothing, baking bread, and preparing meals for the household and ranch workers. She also participated directly in ranch work, including driving teams of horses and later motorized farm machinery in hay fields and taking meals to crews during branding and roundups.

Barby raised Lloyd’s two children from his first marriage, Bonita Barby Speer and Lloyd R. Barby Jr., and she and Lloyd had three children together: Paul Marion Barby, Norma Barby Cafky, and Stanley Barby.

She was also active in the social and agricultural life of the region. Over the course of her life, her affiliations included the Order of the Eastern Star, Riverside Home Demonstration Club, Farm Bureau, and Oklahoma Cowbelles. Contemporary newspaper material also documents community gatherings held at the Barby Ranch.

Lloyd Barby died on August 31, 1955, leaving Celestine a widow in her early fifties. In the years that followed, art became an increasingly important part of her life. She studied with Oklahoma artist Dord Fitz of Arnett and became part of a broader circle of artists and art students in western Oklahoma and the Oklahoma and Texas Panhandles. Through these associations, she developed a sustained interest in painting and collecting.

Barby also became an extensive traveler. Her obituary records trips to Europe, Israel, Egypt, and numerous places within the United States. It further states that she studied with internationally recognized artists during these travels, although the available sources do not identify those artists by name. For that reason, it is safer to describe her as having pursued serious art study and travel without attributing specific teachers that have not been documented. By the 1960s, Barby had assembled what contemporary and later sources described as a significant collection of contemporary art. The surviving evidence supports identifying her as both an artist and collector, although no complete catalog of her own paintings, exhibitions, or collection has yet been located.

One of her enduring personal relationships from this period was with Nyla Johnson, a fellow art student and registered nurse. Johnson remained a close friend for decades and later assisted in Barby's care.

Barby retained property and mineral interests in Beaver County, and her name appears in public records involving agricultural property, mineral rights, and natural-gas production. These records document her continuing involvement with family land and economic interests after Lloyd's death, though they do not by themselves establish the scale of her wealth or the financial sources behind her later activities.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Barby divided her life increasingly between Oklahoma, travel, art, and periods of residence elsewhere. Her earlier family connection to Tucson remained important, and she later returned to Arizona for a period of residence.

After several years in Tucson, Barby spent time in Golden, Colorado, near her daughter Norma, before eventually returning to Oklahoma. In 1995, she moved to Woodward, Oklahoma, to be closer to her son Paul. In her later years she was cared for by family and longtime friends, including Nyla Johnson and Connie McGinnis. In April 2001 she entered Grace Living Center in Woodward.

Celestine Barby died in Woodward on April 7, 2003, at the age of 100 years and 70 days. Funeral services were held in Laverne, Oklahoma, and she was buried beside Lloyd Barby in Knowles Cemetery.

Her life encompassed several very different worlds: early-twentieth-century farm life in the Oklahoma Panhandle, the responsibilities of ranching and family, widowhood, serious engagement with art, extensive travel, collecting, and long-standing participation in civic and

agricultural organizations. The available evidence presents her as a highly independent woman whose interests expanded substantially in midlife and who remained intellectually and culturally active for decades thereafter.



Fig 17. Celestine Barby II House, interior after construction, c. 1976

Barby and Goff: An Evolving Client-Architect Relationship

The Celestine Barby II House was not the product of a single commission between an architect and a new client. It developed from a relationship between Celestine “Lestie” Barby and Bruce Goff that began more than a decade before the Tucson house was designed. Surviving contracts, correspondence, drawings, material samples, and construction records document multiple projects and an extended design dialogue between Barby and Goff. The University of Oklahoma archive preserves correspondence and other materials relating to the Barby projects, while the Art Institute of Chicago holds extensive documentation for the Tucson residence.

The First Barby House, Beaver, Oklahoma

Barby first engaged Goff in 1962 to design a residence in Beaver, Oklahoma. Surviving contract and correspondence establish the beginning of the professional relationship. The first house was completed in the mid-1960s.

The surviving documentation indicates that Barby had specific requirements for the house, including space for her art and practical concerns involving room size, storage, circulation, materials, and cost. Goff's initial ideas were more unconventional than Barby was then prepared to accept, and the design developed through exchanges between architect and client. The resulting residence was comparatively restrained in relation to Goff's more experimental work. The importance of the Beaver house to the Tucson commission is documented by Barby herself. In a 1978 interview concerning her Tucson residence, she recalled that she would not have accepted such an unconventional house when Goff designed her earlier residence. Living in the first Goff house had changed her response to his architecture. The first Barby commission therefore established more than a professional connection. Barby had the unusual experience of living in a Goff-designed environment before commissioning him again.

Barby, Goff, and the Dace House

The relationship continued beyond Barby's own residence. Barby referred William and Myra Dace, also of Beaver, to Goff, resulting in another Goff residential commission. Goff also remained involved with Barby's art collection, including consideration of the placement of artworks within her first residence.

These documented connections demonstrate the continuity of the relationship between Barby and Goff after completion of the first house. Art and its relationship to domestic space were already part of that relationship before the Tucson project.

The 1973 Colorado Project

In 1973, Barby again approached Goff, this time for a proposed summer residence near the Spanish Peaks in southern Colorado. The project was not constructed.

The Colorado commission is important to the chronology because it establishes that the Tucson house did not begin as an isolated request in 1974. Barby had already returned to Goff for another residence before deciding to build in Arizona.

By 1974, the project had shifted to Tucson, where Barby had acquired Lot 99 in Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3. Goff then developed a new design specifically for the Catalina Foothills property. Presentation drawings and extensive design studies survive from that year, followed by working drawings in 1974 and 1975.

The Tucson Commission

By the time Goff began the Tucson house, Barby was an experienced client who had already commissioned one completed residence from him and an additional unbuilt project.

The 1978 Arizona Daily Star account provides unusually direct evidence of Barby's requirements for the new house. She requested ramps rather than stairs and wanted a residence that would not require draperies. These requirements are clearly expressed in the completed building, where ramps organize much of the circulation and window placement provides light and views without relying upon conventional large expanses of residential glazing.

Barby's art was also important to the use of the house. Contemporary descriptions document artworks displayed throughout the residence, while the open interior, extensive wall surfaces, changing floor levels, and upper studio area accommodated her life as an artist and collector. The surviving architectural documentation demonstrates the depth with which Goff developed the commission. The archive includes plot plans, plans, elevations, sections, structural drawings, mechanical systems, site-slope calculations, fireplace and pool details, built-in seating, custom furniture, and the design for the painted roof beams.

The University of Oklahoma collection further preserves correspondence concerning costs, materials, and design decisions, together with material samples associated with the Barby projects. The archival record therefore provides direct evidence that decisions about the house extended from its overall form to individual materials and interior components.

A Long-Term Architectural Patronage

The sequence of commissions establishes an unusually sustained relationship:

1962	Barby commissions Goff to design her first house in Beaver, Oklahoma.
ca. 1964	Beaver residence is completed.
1973	Barby commissions a proposed summer residence near the Spanish Peaks in Colorado; the project remains unbuilt.
1974:	Commission shifts to Tucson and Goff begins the design for the Vista de las Candelas property.
1974–1975	Goff develops the Tucson house through presentation drawings, working drawings, engineering studies, furniture designs, and decorative studies.
ca. 1976	Tucson house is completed by contractor James L. Hamilton.

This chronology is significant because it provides a documented explanation for the relationship between the first and second built Barby houses without requiring speculation about Goff's intentions. The Tucson residence was commissioned by a client who had known Goff and his architecture for more than a decade and had already lived in one of his houses.

Barby's own contemporary comments confirm that her willingness to accept Goff's architecture changed during that period. The contrast between the comparatively restrained Beaver residence and the much more unconventional Tucson house can therefore be understood within the documented evolution of the client-architect relationship.

The Celestine Barby II House represents the culmination of that relationship. Its significance derives not only from Goff's authorship but from the unusually well-documented process through which a returning client and architect developed successive residential projects over more than a decade. The Tucson house is the second completed residence Goff designed for Barby and the most mature surviving expression of their architectural collaboration.

PIMA COUNTY - TUCSON, ARIZONA

PERMIT: BUILDING ☐ USE ☐ OCCUPANCY ☐ **117612**

MAP NO. **77** FEE \$ **35.00**

STREET & NO. **7110 N CAMINO DE FOSFORD**

LOT NO. **99** BLOCK NO. _____ ZONE **CR 1**

SUBDIVISION: **VISTA DE LAS CANDELAS** PARCEL NO. _____

SECTION _____ TOWNSHIP _____ RANGE _____

OWNER **CELESTINE BARBY** PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

BUILDER **K SON CONST. CO-2100 E BEVERLY-622 5432**

TO PERMIT **RESIDENCE AND GARAGE AND PORCHES**

3064 SQ. FT. (BLOCK)

EST. COST (LABOR & MATERIAL) **70,000** INSP. DATE _____

DATE ISSUED **5-12-75** DATE EXPIRES **2-12-76**

CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY B/A CASE _____

THIS PERMIT IS ISSUED ON THE BASIS OF YOUR APPLICATION AND PLOT PLAN
ANY CHANGES MUST BE CLEARED BY THE INSPECTOR.

APPLICANT ☒ *Dmos* ☐ OWNER ☒ BUILDER ☒ AGENT

ZONING INSPECTOR *Wm. Yountson*

SANITARY FACILITIES: SEWER ☐ SEPTIC ☐

REMARKS:

ZONING INSPECTION RECORD					
	DATE REQUESTED	DATE INSPECTED	CONFORM TEST NOT	INSPECTOR'S INITIALS	REMARKS
FOUNDATION SET BACKS	5-30-75	✓	✓	W	No
	7-25-75	✓	✓	W	then
	11-18-75	✓	✓	W	walls
	1-12-76	✓	✓	W	same
	2-24-76	✓	✓	W	Per
	4-27-76	✓	✓	W	same
	5-13-76	✓	✓	W	roof

Fig 18 Celestine Barby II House Construction Permit. Pima County

Design Development of the Celestine Barby II House

As noted above, the Celestine Barby II House is exceptionally well documented through surviving architectural drawings. The Bruce Goff Collection at the Art Institute of Chicago preserves presentation drawings, plan and elevation studies, engineering studies, furniture drawings, a beam-stencil design, and several working-drawing sets for the Tucson commission.

The earliest complete set consists of seven presentation drawings. Goff continued to revise the house through numerous plan and detail studies. The archive includes plan-and-elevation studies, overlays, annotated plans, preliminary working drawings, framing studies, wall sections, window details, site-slope calculations, and engineering calculations. The final plan is organized around two principal wings meeting at approximately 120 degrees, with multiple floor levels and ramps responding to the sloping ridge site.

The elevation studies also document an iterative process. The collection contains preliminary and final southwest and east elevations, showing that Goff continued to refine the exterior composition during design development.

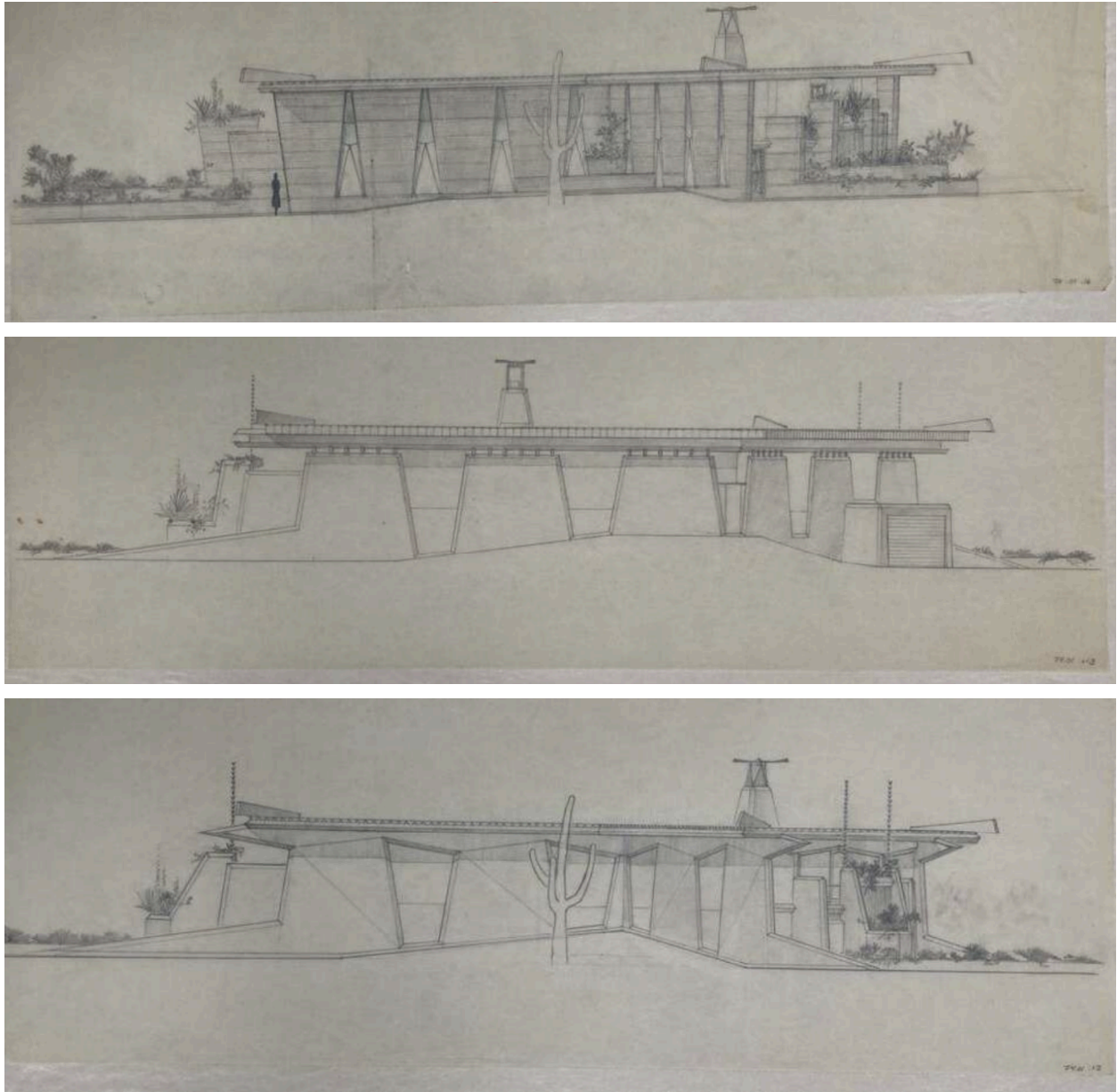


Fig 19 Celestine Barby II House, Design Evolution Drawings, Art Institute of Chicago

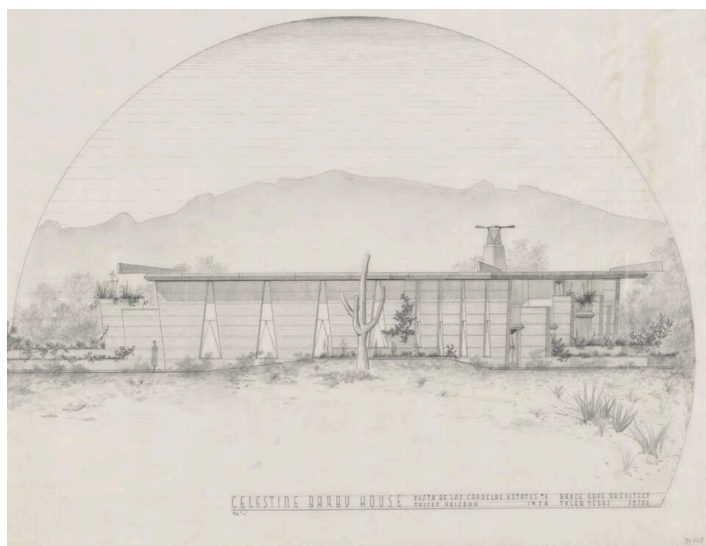
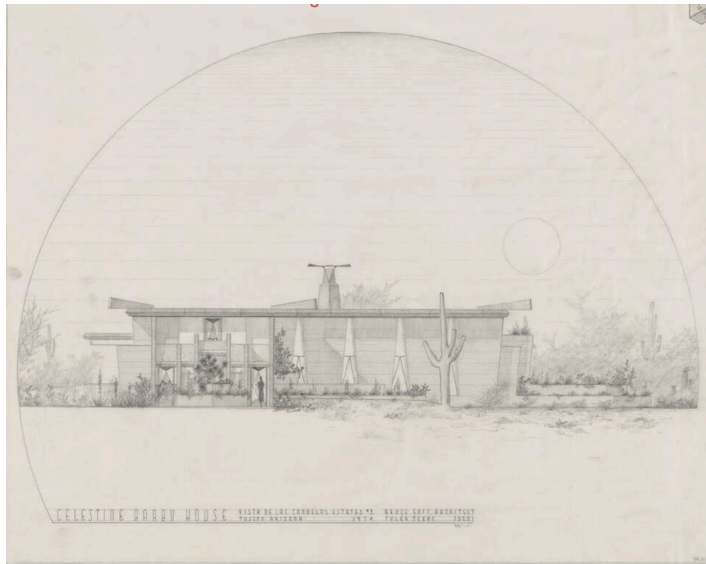
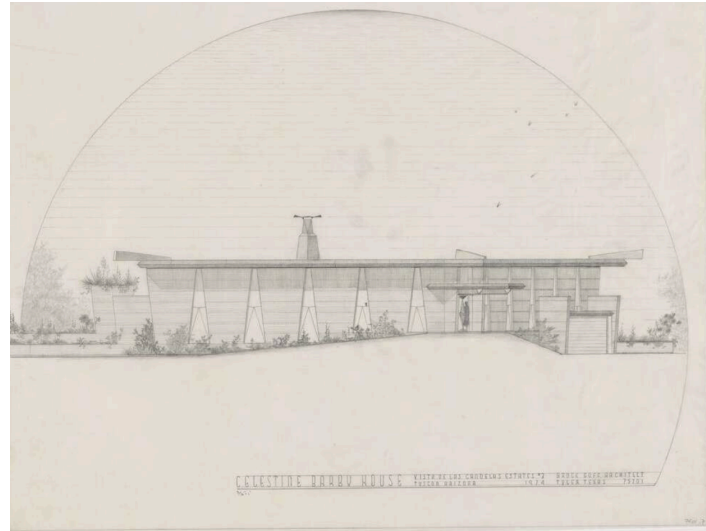


Fig 20 Celestine Barby II House, Design Evolution Drawings, Art Institute of Chicago

Several major architectural features were developed as independent design elements. A separate drawing records the fireplace and pool section, while later construction documents include the fireplace, pool, and living-room seating. The archive also includes designs for chairs and a dining table made specifically for the residence.

The exposed roof structure received the same level of attention. Goff prepared a half-scale drawing titled "Design for Stenciled Beams Celestine Barby House Tucson Arizona." The surviving polychrome beam decoration can therefore be directly identified as part of his original architectural conception.

By September 10, 1974, the project had advanced to a ten-sheet working-drawing set prepared by James "Jimi" Yucas. It included the plot plan, slab and floor plans, elevations, sections, roof and canopy framing, mechanical plans, stair and framing details, and specifications. Design development continued into 1975. A later thirteen-sheet set dated May 7, 1975 documented foundations, interior finishes, roof framing, interior elevations, wall sections, fireplace and pool details, built-in seating, mechanical systems, plumbing, and electrical work. The strongest construction chronology is therefore: design initiated in 1974, continued architectural development through 1975, and completion approximately 1976. Archival descriptions identify construction photographs from late 1975, and the 1978 Arizona Daily Star reported that contractor James L. Hamilton completed the house approximately two years after Goff began the design.

The completed residence preserves the principal concepts documented in these drawings: the angular two-wing plan, stepped levels and ramps, exposed masonry, broad projecting roof, clerestories, balconies, suspended fireplace, integrated pool and terrace, custom furnishings, and stenciled roof structure. The surviving drawings show that the Barby House was conceived as a coordinated environment in which site, plan, structure, circulation, furnishings, color, and ornament were developed together.

Criterion C

The Celestine Barby II House is significant under National Register Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as the work of master architect Bruce Goff and as a residence that possesses high artistic values and embodies distinctive characteristics of late twentieth-century Modern architecture. The house is particularly important because its significance is evident not only in its overall form, but in the degree to which Goff integrated site, structure, circulation, materials, ornament, furnishings, and landscape into a unified design.

Work of a Master

Bruce Goff had established a national reputation for highly individual residential architecture decades before the Tucson commission. By the 1970s, his work was recognized for unconventional planning, experimental materials, expressive structure, and designs developed specifically for individual clients and sites rather than from a repeatable stylistic formula.

The Barby House belongs to this mature period. It was not an early experiment or a derivative commission. Goff had already worked with Celestine Barby for more than a decade, and the Tucson project allowed him to develop a substantially more ambitious residence than her earlier house in Beaver, Oklahoma.

The extensive surviving architectural record confirms Goff's direct authorship and the depth of his involvement. The Art Institute of Chicago collection preserves presentation drawings, numerous plan and elevation studies, preliminary and final elevations, furniture designs, engineering studies, several working-drawing sets, and a dedicated design for the painted roof beams. The September 1974 and May 1975 working sets document the building from plot plan and foundations through elevations, framing, mechanical systems, interior finishes, fireplace, pool, and built-in seating.

The house is therefore a well-documented example of Goff's architectural practice. Distinctive Architectural Characteristics The Barby House does not derive its architectural distinction from a single unusual feature. Its significance lies in the coordination of several highly individualized design elements.

The plan is organized around two principal wings meeting at approximately 120 degrees, rather than a conventional rectangular arrangement. This geometry responds directly to the ridge site and permits multiple orientations toward the surrounding landscape. The interior is similarly unconventional. Floor levels rise and fall within a largely continuous volume, while ramps, platforms, balconies, and open railings organize circulation without dividing the principal space into conventional enclosed rooms. The suspended fireplace forms a vertical focal point within this open composition. The masonry walls are also treated in a distinctive manner. Brick is not used simply as a planar surface. At windows, corners, balcony openings, and wall terminations, individual courses project or recede to create stepped and corbelled profiles. The resulting masonry simultaneously functions as structure, enclosure, ornament, and frame.

Above the walls, a broad shallow roof projects deeply beyond the enclosure and rises dramatically at its outer corners. Narrow glazed areas between the wall tops and roof structure create clerestory light and visually separate the roof from the masonry below. The result is a deliberate contrast between heavy, grounded walls and a roof that appears to hover above them. These characteristics are clearly visible in the surviving house and correspond to Goff's extensive design studies and working drawings. The archive includes preliminary and final southwest and east elevations, demonstrating deliberate refinement of the building's exterior form.

Structure as Ornament

One of the house's strongest expressions of Goff's mature work is the treatment of its exposed roof structure. The beams are not concealed behind a conventional ceiling. They remain fully visible and are decorated with a repeating polychrome geometric stencil. The Art Institute archive preserves Goff's half-scale colored drawing specifically identified as the "Design for

Stenciled Beams Celestine Barby House Tucson Arizona.” The surviving painted beams establish that the decorative ceiling was not a later embellishment. Ornament was incorporated directly into the structure during design. Brightly colored braces, dark framing, wood roof decking, clerestory glazing, and the painted beam pattern combine to create a ceiling that is simultaneously structural and pictorial. This treatment demonstrates an important distinction between Goff’s work and the more austere expressions of Modernism that rejected ornament. At the Barby House, ornament is modern precisely because it emerges from structure, material, repetition, and geometry rather than from historical reference.

High Artistic Values

The Barby House possesses high artistic value because its visual character is sustained across multiple scales. At the scale of the landscape, Goff used the angular plan and balconies to connect the residence with the ridge and distant views. At the scale of the exterior, broad roof planes, corbelled masonry, deep shadow, projecting beams, narrow glazing, and balconies produce a highly sculptural composition. At the scale of the interior, changes in floor level, ramps, the suspended fireplace, exposed brick, cabinetry, lighting, and painted roof structure create a continuous visual environment. At the scale of furniture and detail, Goff designed chairs, a dining table, living-room seating, and decorative beam patterns specifically for the residence. The archive preserves dedicated chair and dining-table drawings in addition to the beam-stencil design. The artistic significance of the house therefore cannot be reduced to façade design. Goff conceived architecture, structure, ornament, furniture, and interior space as interrelated parts of the same commission.

Materials and Construction

The house also demonstrates Goff’s characteristic interest in using relatively ordinary materials in unconventional ways. Brick, exposed wood framing, flakeboard, glass, steel, paint, and other materials are employed directly rather than disguised behind more conventional finishes. The flakeboard cabinetry is particularly notable. A material generally associated with inexpensive construction becomes a dominant interior surface through repetition and extensive built-in use. Likewise, conventional brick is transformed through corbelling and stepping into highly sculptural wall edges and openings. The significance lies less in the rarity of the materials than in the manner in which Goff manipulated them. This approach is consistent throughout the residence: inexpensive or familiar materials acquire architectural importance through pattern, placement, craftsmanship, and visual relationships.

Site-Specific Design

The Barby House is also distinguished by the degree to which its form is tied to its specific location. The archive preserves plot-plan studies, site-slope calculations, engineering studies, wall sections, and multiple plan revisions, demonstrating sustained attention to the topography of Lot 99. The completed building uses the ridge rather than neutralizing it. Floor levels change with the site; exterior walls step with grade; balconies project toward views; and the angled plan opens toward multiple portions of the surrounding landscape. This site dependence is important to Criterion C because the Barby House is not simply an unusual object placed on a desert lot.

Its principal geometry and spatial organization are inseparable from the property on which it was constructed.

Recognition of the House

The architectural distinction of the Barby House was recognized shortly after its completion. In 1978, the house was selected for the cover of Jeffrey Cook's book *The Architecture of Bruce Goff*. The choice placed the Tucson residence in a particularly prominent position within the contemporary published record of Goff's work. On April 23, 1978, the *Arizona Daily Star* devoted a full page of its Home section to the residence under the headline "Lavender, orange – part of an 'original.'" The article and photographs documented the house's unusual interior, patterned ceiling, masonry, dramatic floor treatment, and exterior form. In 1984, the *Tucson Citizen* featured the property under the headline "Live in a Bruce Goff work of art," again emphasizing the architecture rather than simply the house's real-estate value. It has also been included in the film *Goff in the Desert, der Wuste, Sealed 2003 Film by Heinz Emigholz, features 62 Buildings by Architect, NTSC all regions*. The House was included in the 2010, "50 under 50" list of most significant 20th century modern houses in Tucson by the University of Arizona based, Modern Architectural Preservation Project of Tucson, it was featured in the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation 2013 Tucson Modernism Week and named a Modern Architectural Classic that same year. The house was again featured as part of Tucson Modernism Week in 2025. Drawing details of the house are included in the 2025 publication *Bruce Goff: Material Worlds* by Alison Fisher and Craig Lee.

Significance within Tucson

Within Tucson, the Barby House represents an unusually individual expression of the Modern Movement. It shares important concerns with regional modern architecture in southern Arizona: response to climate, substantial masonry, deep shade, controlled glazing, indoor-outdoor relationships, and close adaptation to desert topography. Its formal language, however, is distinctly Goff's. The stepped masonry, painted exposed structure, angular geometry, ramped circulation, suspended fireplace, custom furnishings, and dramatic roof form distinguish the house from more conventional expressions of Tucson postwar Modernism. The residence is therefore important not because it is typical, but because it demonstrates the breadth of modern architectural practice present in Tucson by the mid-1970s. It represents the intersection of a nationally important architect's mature work with the specific climatic, topographic, and cultural conditions of the Catalina Foothills.

The Celestine Barby II House meets Criterion C because it:

- represents a documented mature work of Bruce Goff;
- embodies distinctive architectural characteristics in its 120-degree plan, ramped and terraced interior, corbelled masonry, uplifted roof, clerestory glazing, exposed structural system, and suspended fireplace;
- possesses high artistic values through the deliberate integration of structure, ornament, color, furniture, and spatial composition;
- demonstrates distinctive use of ordinary and industrial materials;

- responds specifically to its foothills site and topography; and
- received substantial contemporary and subsequent recognition as an important example of Goff's architecture.

The house is best understood not simply as a residence designed by a famous architect, but as a highly resolved example of Bruce Goff's mature architectural philosophy, in which client, site, structure, material, movement, decoration, and furnishing were developed as parts of a single architectural composition.

Integrity

The Celestine Barby II House retains a high degree of integrity in all seven aspects recognized by the National Register: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. For a property significant primarily under Criterion C, the survival of design, materials, and workmanship is particularly important. In the Barby House, the principal architectural form, spatial organization, structural system, masonry, roof geometry, circulation, decorative beam treatment, fireplace, cabinetry, and relationship to the ridge remain readily identifiable. The house retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance.

Location

The residence remains on its original site, Lot 99 of Vista de las Candelas Estates No. 3, at 7110 North Camino de Fosforo. The house has not been moved or substantially reoriented, and its relationship to the ridge, surrounding slopes, approach, and principal long-distance views remains intact. Integrity of location is excellent.

Design

The fundamental design of the house survives to a very high degree. The original approximately 120-degree two-wing plan, terraced interior organization, ramps, balconies, broad roof with uplifted ends, stepped and corbelled masonry, tall narrow openings, clerestory glazing, exposed roof framing, suspended fireplace, built-in storage, and principal circulation system remain present. The extensive surviving Goff drawings provide an unusually precise basis for comparison. The archive documents the house in plans, elevations, sections, framing drawings, interior elevations, fireplace and pool details, built-in seating, furniture drawings, and the beam-stencil design. Current photographs demonstrate that the principal architectural composition represented in these drawings remains legible. Alterations have occurred primarily at the level of finishes and secondary elements rather than through major changes to plan or massing. No evidence reviewed for this nomination indicates a substantial addition that obscures Goff's original architectural organization. Integrity of design is very high.

Setting

The property continues to occupy a low-density Catalina Foothills setting characterized by sloping terrain, desert vegetation, exposed rock and gravel, and broad views toward the surrounding mountains and Tucson Basin. Vegetation has matured considerably since the 1970s, and development elsewhere in the Foothills has increased. These changes have altered

the degree to which the house is visible from some viewpoints but have not destroyed the essential relationship between the residence and its ridge-top setting. The house remains surrounded by desert vegetation and continues to be experienced as a building positioned within rather than separated from the natural terrain. Its original site relationship, one of the principal generators of the plan, remains understandable. Integrity of setting is high.

Materials

A substantial quantity of original architectural material survives. The exposed brick masonry remains the dominant wall material both inside and outside the residence. Original or early roof framing, clerestory glazing, structural members, metal railings, flakeboard cabinetry and partitions, fireplace components, and built-in features also survive. Particularly important is the extensive survival of the painted geometric decoration applied to the exposed roof beams, a feature directly documented by Goff's original half-scale stencil drawing. The best-documented alterations occurred in the early 1980s. A 1984 account described a "minor redecoration" in which highly patterned carpeting was replaced with beige carpeting, metal railings originally painted a vivid pink were repainted black, and deteriorated orange indoor-outdoor carpet applied beneath balcony eaves was replaced with plywood. Subsequent changes include replacement of some floor finishes, changes to appliances and movable furnishings, later exterior shade devices, localized roof and maintenance repairs, and alterations within portions of the pool and terrace area. These changes affect secondary finishes and equipment more than the principal architectural fabric. Integrity of materials is retained.

Workmanship

The house retains exceptionally strong evidence of its original workmanship.

The most important surviving examples include the stepped and corbelled masonry, glazing fitted within irregular masonry openings, exposed structural framing, built-in cabinetry, metalwork, and the hand-applied polychrome decoration of the roof beams. These elements are essential to the architectural character of the house because they reveal how Goff's drawings were translated into construction. The brickwork is not simply wall construction but carefully manipulated masonry in which individual courses form geometric openings and terminations. Likewise, the exposed roof system combines structure, finish, color, and ornament. The survival of these elements allows the physical building to communicate the highly customized nature of its construction without reliance solely on archival documentation. Integrity of workmanship is excellent.

Feeling

The residence continues to convey the distinctive visual and spatial experience documented shortly after completion. Historic photographs show an interior dominated by exposed masonry, intense color, ramps, changing floor levels, a suspended fireplace, art displays, and the continuous patterned roof structure. Current photographs retain these same fundamental qualities. Although some of the original color scheme and floor finishes were modified, the experience of moving through a large terraced interior beneath the painted structural canopy

remains remarkably intact. The strong contrast between heavy masonry walls and the apparently floating roof also remains evident externally. Integrity of feeling is very high.

Association

The Barby House retains a direct and readily understandable association with both Bruce Goff and Celestine Barby. Goff's authorship is documented through an extensive surviving architectural archive. More importantly for integrity, many features specifically represented in that archive remain physically present, including the principal plan, elevations, roof structure, masonry treatment, fireplace, built-in elements, furniture-related design features, and painted beams. The association with Goff is therefore expressed directly through the surviving building rather than depending only upon documentary attribution. The house also continues to convey its association with Barby as an artist, collector, and long-term Goff client. Its extensive wall surfaces, ramps, open interior, storage, and spatial organization remain capable of conveying the residential environment created for her. Integrity of association is excellent.

Integrity Conclusion

The alterations made to the Barby House since completion do not materially diminish its ability to convey its architectural significance. The most clearly documented changes involve color, carpeting, floor finishes, balcony-eave finishes, shade devices, and later maintenance, while the principal form, plan, structure, masonry, roof geometry, circulation, and character-defining interior features survive.

The comparison between historic photographs and present conditions is particularly persuasive. The house remains immediately recognizable in exterior form and interior organization. Its defining elements, including the uplifted roof, stepped masonry, balconies, tall narrow openings, ramps, exposed structure, patterned beams, suspended fireplace, and integration with the foothills site, survive as a coherent ensemble.

The Celestine Barby II House therefore retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance under Criterion C as a mature work of Bruce Goff and as an exceptional example of late Modern residential architecture.

Designation of the house as a Pima County Landmark is an important step in understanding the protecting our regions architectural heritage.

Bibliography and Sources

Primary and Archival Sources

Art Institute of Chicago, Ryerson and Burnham Archives. Bruce Goff Collection.
Celestine Barby House No. 2, Tucson, Arizona, De Long Job 74.01. The collection contains the principal documentary record for the Tucson house, including seven 1974 presentation drawings, publication drawings, numerous design studies, preliminary and final elevations,

furniture designs, the original design for the stenciled beams, engineering studies, and successive working-drawing sets through May 1975.

University of Oklahoma Libraries, Western History Collections / American School Archive.
Celestine Barby Collection of Bruce Goff Architectural Papers.

Correspondence, architectural material, construction photographs, and material samples relating to Goff's commissions for Celestine Barby.

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Pima County Assessor. Parcel 108-05-0960, 7110 North Camino de Fosforo, Tucson, Arizona.
Contemporary Newspapers and Periodicals

Kantrowitz, Judy. "Live in a Bruce Goff Work of Art." Tucson Citizen, September 28, 1984. The article provides an important retrospective account of the house, including descriptions of its original finishes and documented early alterations.

Parham, Maria. "Lavender, Orange – Part of an 'Original.'" Arizona Daily Star, April 23, 1978. Full-page feature documenting the residence shortly after completion, with historic exterior and interior photographs.

Giovannini, Joseph. "Architectural Legacy Spreads West." New York Times, syndicated in the Arizona Daily Star, July 28, 1985. The article discusses Goff's broader architectural legacy and illustrates the Barby House as an example of his work in the West.

Tucson-area real-estate advertisements for the Celestine Barby House, ca. 1980.
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Bruce Goff Scholarship

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Modern Architecture and Historic Context

Allaback, Sarah. "Introduction." In *Essays on Modern Architecture*. National Park Service, 2003. Allaback's essay provides the national framework used in this nomination to distinguish the broader Modern Movement from the narrower International Style and to understand the development of multiple forms of American Modernism. The National Park Service text has also been incorporated into recent Tucson historic-property documentation as a framework for evaluating modern architecture.

Evans, Chris, and R. Brooks Jeffery. *Architecture of the Modern Movement in Tucson, 1945–1975*. Tucson: Preservation Studies Program, University of Arizona, 2005.

This source should remain in the bibliography as a Tucson-specific reference, even though, as we decided, the nomination narrative should not rely on Evans and Jeffery as its principal interpretive voice.

Property-Specific Research

Barby family and current-owner materials. Historic photographs, correspondence, property documentation, and contemporary architectural photography supplied for preparation of this nomination.

Celestine Barby

Barby, Celestine. Archival correspondence with Bruce Goff. University of Oklahoma Libraries, Celestine Barby Collection of Bruce Goff Architectural Papers.

"Barby, Celestine." Obituary and biographical material, Beaver County, Oklahoma, 2003. Public records relating to Celestine Barby's ranch, property, mineral interests, and community activities in Beaver County, Oklahoma.

Contemporary Photographs

All photographs taken in November 2025 by GM Vargas for Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation

- 001 Northwest corner roof detail
- 002 Southeast corner, looking southwest
- 003 Southeast corner roof detail
- 004 East Elevation, looking west

- 005 Southeast corner detail, looking west
- 006 South Elevation, looking northeast
- 007 West Elevation detail, looking east
- 008 Southwest corner detail,, looking northeast
- 009 West Elevation, looking east
- 010 Northwest Elevation, looking southeast
- 011 Northwest Elevation, looking southeast
- 012 Interior, entry masonry detail looking east
- 013 Interior, living room, looking north
- 014 Interior, painted beam detail.



Photo 001



Photo 002



Photo 003



Photo 004



Photo 005



Photo 006



Photo 007



Photo 008



Photo 009



Photo 010



Photo 011



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14