



## Historic Landmark Nomination Proposal General Information

### OVERVIEW:

Historic zoning is a zoning overlay which is added to the base zoning of a specific tract of land (for example (HR-1). This zoning overlay can apply to local historic preservation zones (HPZs) and historic landmarks (HLs).

Designating an HL is a two part process. First, the proposed HL is subject to a historical designation review process. The **Steps to Establish or Amend a Historic Preservation Zone or Historic Landmark** (Article 5.8.4 UDC) are as follows:

- 1.) **Nomination Proposal Package** prepared by applicant and submitted to City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office. (Requirements regarding Nomination Proposal can be found in SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST p.3)
- 2.) Applicant attends a **Historical Commission Nomination Review** and presents the Nomination Proposal and any other evidence of historical significance and integrity in a public meeting.
- 3.) **The Mayor and Council review** the project and the recommendations and decide whether to initiate the designation process.
- 4.) Rezoning Process

### WHERE TO APPLY:

#### City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office:

Jonathan Mabry, PhD | Historic Preservation Officer  
jonathan.mabry@tucsonaz.gov | Phone: (520) 837-6965

Jennifer Levstik, M.A. | Preservation Lead Planner  
jennifer.levstik@tucsonaz.gov | Phone: (520) 837-6961

310 N. Commerce Park Loop, Santa Rita Bldg • PO Box 27210 • Tucson, AZ 85726-7210

## **SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:**

Refer Submittal Checklist. Complete Application Forms, and supplemental materials.

## **THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE CONSIDERED WHEN REVIEWING A CITY HISTORIC NOMINATION APPLICATION:**

### **Historic Landmark:**

An HL shall include historic sites, buildings, and structures, as defined in Section 11.4.9, and which are individually listed or individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local, state, or national level of significance. Properties that meet the aforementioned criteria may be proposed for designation as an HPZ Contributing Property or Historic Landmark.

### **Historic Landmark**

A historic site or structure of the highest historic, cultural, architectural, or archaeological importance to Tucson that if demolished or significantly altered would constitute an irreplaceable loss to the quality and character of Tucson. A Historic Landmark is an outstanding or unique example of architectural style; is associated with a major historic event, activity, or person; or has unique visual quality and identification. A Historic Landmark may be located within the boundaries of or outside a historic district.

### **Historic Site or Historic Structure**

A building, structure, object, or site, including vegetation or signs located on the premises, that:

- Dates from a particular significant period in Tucson's history, i.e., prehistoric, native indigenous, Pre-Colonial (before 1775), Spanish Frontier (Colonial) (1775-1821), Mexican Frontier (1821-1853), Territorial (1854-1912), Post-Territorial (1912-1920), or Post-World War I Development (1920-1945), or relates to events, personages, or architectural styles that are at least 50 years old; however, outstanding examples less than 50 years old should be evaluated on their own merits; and
- Is associated with the lives of outstanding historic personages; or
- Is associated with significant historic events or occurrences; or
- Exemplifies the architectural period in which it was built and has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or method of construction or is the notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius influenced his/her age; or
- Contributes information of archaeological, historic, cultural, or social importance relating to the heritage of the community; or
- Relates positively to buildings in its immediate vicinity in terms of scale, size, massing, etc., such that its removal would be an irreparable loss to the setting.

*For Zoning and Subdivision review, the Unified Development Code (UDC) applies to this application. If you feel the Land Use Code (LUC) should apply, please consult with Zoning review staff. Applicable timeframes can be provided at your request or found in Administrative Manual Sec. 3-02 or found on our website at <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/pdsd>. For information about applications or applicable policies and ordinance, please contact Frank Dillon at 837-6957.*

*By state law, we cannot initiate a discussion with you about your rights and options, but we are happy to answer any questions you might have.*



## Historic Landmark Nomination Proposal Application

**Date Submitted:** July 3, 2018

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### PROPERTY LOCATION INFORMATION

Project Name: Irving D. Rubinstein House  
Property Address: 3838 East Calle Fernando (El Montevideo NRHP District)  
Architect/Designer: William Wilde, Architect  
Builder: Irving D. Rubinstein, Contractor  
Plat Name: El Montevideo Estates, Block: E30' of L5 & W50' of L4 BLK6  
Pima County Parcel Number/s: 125-17-1180 Parcel Use: Residential

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### APPLICANT INFORMATION

APPLICANT NAME: Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation  
ADDRESS: PO Box 40008, Tucson, Arizona, 85717  
PHONE: 520-247-8969  
EMAIL: [info@preservetucson.org](mailto:info@preservetucson.org)  
PROPERTY OWNER NAME: Jerry Schuster & Laura Tremaine  
PHONE: (     )                      FAX: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF OWNER \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT (if not owner) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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### AREA TO BE REZONED

ACRES: .23

Existing Zoning: R-1

Proposed Zoning: HLR-1

## CHECKLIST FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION PROPOSAL

- ☒ **Fee \$330.00 (Base Fee) + Variable Fees**
- ☒ **A completed Historic Nomination Proposal Application (a blank form is attached to this document).**  
Completely fill in all fields on the nomination application form. The Assessor's No. and the complete Legal Description can be found by contacting the Pima County Recorder's Office (<http://www.asr.pima.gov/>)
- ☒ **A completed National Register of Historic Places form or nomination or a State of Arizona Historic Property Inventory Form**  
  
**Pima County Assessor's Maps showing properties within 500' of the designation request**
- ☒ **Pima County Assessor's Record**
- ☒ **Color labeled photographs showing full exterior views, including all elevations, setting, outbuildings, and details of structural and landscape features**
- ☒ **Reproductions (high quality photocopies acceptable) of historical photographs**
- ☒ **A dimensioned, scaled site plan or survey of the site and the location/placement of all buildings/structures on the site.**
- ☒ **A scaled map of the site outlining the geographic boundaries of the proposed area**

\*All plans, maps and other figures should be clearly identified. All figures, including drawings, plans and maps, (excluding photographs, see above requirements) should be of a standard size (8.5" by 11", or 11" by 17").

**A list of proposed Neighborhood Advisory Board Members** (If nominating a Historic Preservation Zone)

### WRITTEN REPORT

- ☒ **Property Description**
  - Present and original (if known) physical appearance and characteristics.
  - A complete, detailed architectural description of all elevations of the exterior of the building and a complete description of all the site elements
  - A description of the interior features should also be included.
  - A brief description of the surrounding neighborhood or natural environment and its development, including relevant features such as neighboring buildings, natural features, topography, major roadway, etc.
  - A complete description of the alterations to the exterior of the building must be included as well.
- ☒ **Statement of Significance and Integrity**
  - A chronological list of prior owners
  - Chronology of past uses
  - Information on historically significant events which occurred at the location
  - Information on architect, landscape architect, builder, contractor and any craftsmen who worked on the on the site
  - The project's historic context, and explain how the building fits into the history of the city and the neighborhood.
- ☒ **Complete Bibliography**



*Rubinstein House, South Elevation, University of Arizona Special Collections,  
Jack Sheaffer Collection, 800 2 MS 435 Box 27 F-7174(A) 6-4-18005*

## **Property Description**

### **Setting**

The Rubinstein House, designed and built in a modernist style, is located in Tucson's El Montevideo Estates (1930), and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The residence was commissioned and built in 1955 by contractor Irving D. Rubinstein as his own home. Rubinstein hired Tucson based Architect William Wilde to design this distinctive residence.

The Rubinstein House is located on a lot on the eastern edge of the subdivision, two properties west of Alvernon Way, at 3838 East Calle Fernando. The house is located towards the back of the lot breaking the prevailing setback on the street. From the road, the house presents a modest facade with the exception of the entry sequence which provides a suggestion of the unique architectural expression. The combination of the urban midtown location, unique architecture and the work of an locally recognized architectural master create an important post-WWII era example of Mid-Century Modern residential architecture in Tucson. At the time of

construction the house showcased an example of progressive architecture within a traditional suburban-urban context.



*Rubinstein House, Entry and south entry wall, photo by Bill Sears.*

The gardens, gravel drive, setbacks, materials, and expressive design combine to create an outstanding example of the emerging post WWII suburban development occurring in Tucson in the 1950s. The flat roof, exposed brick, north facing ribbon windows and spider-leg entry pergola combine to create a subdued street facing facade while the architectural emphasis is on open interior spaces, clearstory window system, expansive uninterrupted south facing window wall, built in cabinetry, movable walls systems and private exterior interconnected spaces. The exterior backyard is cleverly divided in to public, private and service yards that are divided by a distinctive pivoting privacy wall system. A deep roof plane overhanging the window walls create shade in direct response to the extreme desert climate of the Sonoran Desert. These design features create a sense of place that were envisioned by Wilde for the property and controlled through a comprehensive site design.

**North Elevation, (primary public facade)**

The north elevation of the Rubinstein House is the street facing facade. The massing and geometry are broken into two primary rectilinear forms with an entrance sequence in the middle. The eastern section is redbrick with ribbon windows that run horizontally at the upper section of the wall at the ceiling. The west section of the facade is an enclosed carport that was carefully integrated into the design with ribbon windows at the ceiling emulating the window detailing on the house. The enclosure does not detract from the architectural intention but could be removed to restore the original design. The entrance sequence is a combination of structural and decorative elements that both connect the interior and exterior spaces. Cast concrete pavers are framed by a series of four “spider legs,” an inverted L shape projecting from the west over the walkway and fixed to the ground. The entryway has a geometric lattice gate with a pattern that is replicated in the foyer window wall. A lattice system extends over the entrance sequence continues through the center of the house and continues in the rear yard. The use of horizontal overlapping planes is a design convention that carries throughout the house.

**South Elevation. (primary private facade)**

The south elevation, facing the rear yard, is the primary elevation and principal design feature of the house. Using a concrete post and wood beam system, Wilde eliminated the structural need for exterior walls. This allowed the use of expansive glass window walls and sliding glass doors. Wilde use a clerestory system with a raised ceiling height in the center of the living room to let natural light into the living spaces and soften the contrast with the outside desert lighting conditions. The use of continuous glass along the rear of the house combined with exposed wood ceilings that project past the windows to create deep shaded covered extension of the house that is a response to the desert environment. The use of glass walls creates a unique relationship between the the indoor and outdoor environment. The living room, kitchen and foyer become inseparable from the exterior. The built-in features and finishes become part of the overall visual fabric viewing the house of the exterior.

**West Elevation (primary private facade)**

The west elevation includes a series of red brick and window walls that lead to small private yards and service areas. The master bathroom utilizes the integration of indoor/outdoor space separated by a glass wall. The design includes the extension of a tile walls from the bathroom to the outside and a terrazzo tub mirrored by a exterior lily pond. The use of these design conventions extend the outdoors in and become part of the overall visual fabric viewing the house of the exterior.

**East Elevation.**

The east elevation a deep patio created by the extension of the roof plane and the continued use of glass window walls. The use of glass walls creates a unique relationship between the the indoor and outdoor environment. The living room, kitchen and foyer become inseparable from the exterior. The built-in features and finishes become part of the overall visual fabric viewing the house of the exterior.

## Interior Features

The City of Tucson Historic Landmark designation does not regulate the interior of privately owned property. However, the extensive use of glass window walls creates a unique situation. The building's dramatic, structurally-expressive form resulted from architect's William Wilde's vision to create an open interior space that could be flexibly adapted for changing needs and uses. The interior columns set back from the window wall support the roof which bridges the house and allows for maximum flexibility of interior spaces which includes moveable walls. Both the interior and exterior are of "special historical and aesthetic interest." And both the interior and exterior are proposed for designation this would include designation of the all built-in cabinets, both in the kitchen and bathrooms, concrete details, terrazzo bathtub, built in furniture. Changes to any interior details visible from the exterior of the home should be reviewed.



Rubinstein House, living room and south window wall, photo by Bill Sears.

## Garden and Site Walls

The hardscape of the front yard (see photo 002) and rear perimeter brick wall are character defining features of the house. The rear garden brick planter walls and concrete pavement is secondary character defining features of the house and should be considered when making alterations. (see photo 013) The rear garden also includes a metal frame system with a series of privacy screens that pivot open and closed to separate the yard into public and private space; this system is a character defining features of the house (see photo 004).



Rubinstein House, dining room and kitchen and east window wall, photo by Bill Sears.

## Alterations

The house retains an exceptionally high degree of integrity. The only alteration is the enclosure of the carport on the north facade, that was carefully integrated into the design with ribbon windows at the ceiling emulating the window detailing on the house.

## Statement of Significance and Integrity

The Rubinstein House is eligible as a city of Tucson Historic Landmark. 1. Rubinstein House is from a significant period in Tucson's history: *Post-World War II Development (1945-1975)* and is

a distinct architectural style that is least 50 years old. 2. Rubinstein House is an outstanding examples of Modern design and is associated with significant historic events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history in particular: *Community Development in Tucson 1945 - 1975* 3. Rubinstein House exemplifies the architectural period in which it was built and has distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style: *Modern; Irving D. Rubinstein, builder; William Wilde, Architect.* 4. Rubinstein House contributes historic, cultural, and social importance relating to the heritage of the Tucson community; and 5. Rubinstein House relates positively to buildings in its immediate vicinity in terms of scale, size, massing, etc., such that its removal would be an irreparable loss to the setting and a diminishment to the architectural heritage of Tucson.

The individual eligibility of the Rubinstein House is unquestioned.

The house derives its significance from its architecture and design. There is no full list of previous owners.

### **El Montevideo Estates**

The Rubinstein House is an important part of the development of the El Montevideo subdivision (1930-1957). El Montevideo Estates is located in Tucson, Arizona in the Santa Cruz River valley of Southern Arizona's Sonoran desert uplands. The neighborhood is located in central Tucson adjacent to the El Con Mall and former site of the El Conquistador Hotel. The neighborhood is geographically defined by Fifth Street to the North, Broadway Boulevard to the South, Alvernon Way to the east and El Con Mall property to the west.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the subdivision and development of El Montevideo. The development of the district is outlined in the 1994 National Register of Historic Places nomination prepared by Janet H. Strittmatter of Johns & Strittmatter, Inc.:

Ownership of the land upon which El Montevideo neighborhood stands can be traced to the original patent of land to a James A. Gordon, granted by President William H. Taft, of the entire southeast quarter of Section 9 in Township 14 South, Range 14 East, containing 160 acres. This patent was granted under the Act of Congress of May 20, 1862, known as the Homestead Act. Real estate transactions between the original ownership and the ownership of a portion of this quarter section by the brothers Ben B. Mathews and S.H. Mathews have not been found. On April 2, 1930, a bargain and sale deed was recorded between Old Pueblo Realty Company, a realty corporation and S.H. Mathews and Winifred B. Mathews, his wife, and Mountain View Homesites, Inc., granting the latter title to the east half of the east half of the southeast quarter of Section 9, and the east half of the west half of the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 9, in Township 14 South, and Range 14 East, containing approximately 50 acres. The parties affiliated with Old Pueblo Realty Company included Ben B. Mathews, president, S. H. Mathews and Winifred B. Mathews. Very little has been found about the

Mathews. Ben Mathews is associated with Urban Realty, which was involved in the sale of land for El Encanto Estates. As previously mentioned, he is also named as the donor of part of the land for the El Conquistador Hotel. He and his family obviously purchased land and formed several corporations to undertake development activities in this area of the city. One of the original residents, Phillips Brooks Quinsler, Jr. (3840 E. Calle Guaymas, #26), refers to a "Cecil" Mathews, whose presence was frequently felt during the early years of the development of El Montevideo Estates, especially at the site of the pump house between 3761 E. Calle De Soto (#55) and 313 N. El Camino del Norte (#56), where the water supply for the neighborhood was obtained. This Mr. Mathews allegedly moved to La Mesa, California, to continue his real estate ventures.

The major portion of the El Montevideo Neighborhood was subdivided in 1930. The original plat, El Montevideo Estates, was laid out in the grid plan and consisted of blocks 1 through 10 (see map.) Lots were 60 feet by 135 feet but during the early years, as the advertisement claimed, parcels tended to be larger. Many of the homes built during the 1930s are on these larger parcels. For example, the largest parcel pertains to the Quinsler residence, 3840 E. Calle Guaymas (#26), and includes lots 1-6 of block 7. In 1948, blocks 9 and 10 were resubdivided and became Ridgeland Resubdivision with curvilinear Ridge Drive added to accommodate a relocation of the former Camino El Conquistador. Ridgeland Resubdivision was owned by Charles and Kathryn Sutherland and Percival N. Williams and his wife Lou S. Williams, the owners of a residence known as "El Faro en el Desierto" (The Lighthouse in the Desert). In 1955, Ridgeland's Block 9 was further resubdivided to form the Ridge Subdivision, with residences radiating about a cul-de-sac. This property was owned by Forest A. Barr and Winifred Barr, his wife. In 1978, Viner Ash Place, a subdivision of former acreage in the 3700 block of Calle Cortez and Calle Barcelona, added six residences to the neighborhood. Around 1973, at the intersection of 5th Street and Dodge Boulevard, the Tamarack Condominiums were constructed on the site of the former Lighthouse YMCA, a conversion of the historic 5th Street residence once owned by the Williams.

As mentioned, El Montevideo Estates had its own water supply. The Citizen advertisement of 1930 claimed that El Montevideo maintained a well which was "of the deep well type, 240 feet in depth" that tapped "the Rincon water strata of soft, pure water." The plant was entirely enclosed beneath ground where "pressure tanks and latest improved Pomona deep well turbine pump" were housed. According to Phillips Brooks Quinsler, Jr., the water mains, which were installed along the easements behind the homes, were of good quality used piping, as it was the Depression. (Serious problems with these old mains have occurred recently and the city is undertaking to relocate new mains in the right-of-way along the streets.) The early residences all had cesspools, with sewers being installed beneath the streets probably in the late 1940s. Overhead electric and telephone lines have always run down the utility easements and along El Camino del Norte.

From its inception, the El Montevideo neighborhood has attracted and been accessible to primarily upper middle class, professional residents. There has always been an excellent mix of ages, and a tendency for residents to remain in the neighborhood. The 1936 Tucson magazine advertisement lists the first inhabitants of El Montevideo by name and profession: "Among those who have already built homes in El Montevideo are Fred Winn, Supervisor of Coronado National Forest; Prof. O.H. Wedel of University of Arizona; Dr. B. A. Glennie, of Thomas-Davis Clinic; E.T. Dukes, business manager, Thomas-Davis Clinic; Mrs. Louise Raney of Arizona Studio; P.B. Quinsler of Tidmarsh Engineering Co., D. J. Lyons, John Woolfolk, Miss Margaret Knight and G. B. Kelley of Kelley's Prescription Shop." There have been doctors, dentists, contractors, realtors, archaeologists, teachers, authors, interior decorators, architects, engineers, bakery owners, lawyers, proprietors of the shops on Broadway Boulevard as well as numerous University professors in such fields as fine arts, astronomy, anthropology, economics, drama, biology, botany and psychology.

Early residents came to the new subdivision for a variety of reasons. Some reported that they were attracted by the "openness" and "better air" away from the city center. Several reported that, like many early inhabitants of Tucson, their families had moved to the desert for health reasons, especially lung ailments such as tuberculosis. The Quinsler family moved from Massachusetts on account of Mrs. Quinsler's bronchiectasis and emphysema. She was treated by Dr. Roland Davison, a lung specialist, and resided in a casita at the Desert Sanatorium (the present location of Tucson Medical Center) when she first arrived. Leionne Salter's (3801 E. Calle Cortez, #85) first husband, Mr. Raney, also suffered from tuberculosis. The Lyons family also moved to Tucson on account of Mr. Lyons' bronchial ailments. (Strittmatter, Janet H., NRHP El Montevideo Neighborhood Residential Historic District, 1994)

On May 4, 1930 the Arizona Daily Star noted the success of the new subdivision in an article titled: El Montevideo Shows Phenomenal Success:

"What is believed by many to be the most phenomenal sale of property in or near Tucson for many years is taking place at El Montevideo (View of the Mountains) Estates on East Broadway near the El Conquistador Hotel. In twenty days 104 lots have been sold and at least ten large homes are assured.

This addition is only 300 feet from the hotel property and is on the new oil paving, across the street from the Municipal golf links. Protection for the owners is assured because of restrictions and the surroundings.

A large, deep well is now being drilled and an abundance of pure water is certain. Water will be furnished to every lot.

The prices for the lots are less than one-third the amount asked for nearby property. A large double homesite can be purchased for less than the cost of developing waster on acreage elsewhere. Choice homesites can be had now at prices as low as \$295.00 and \$595.00.

The terms, too, are very attractive, as no interest is charged for one year and no taxes for two years. Small down payments are accepted and monthly payment as low as \$10,00.

It is almost certain that this property will be completely sold out within a short time. There are only forty choice homesites still unsold and the sale is moving rapidly.

The tract is owned and developed by Mountain View Homesites, Inc. The company invites everyone to come out and look over the tract, whether purchases are made or not. There are courteous salesmen to direct you and there will be no obligation on your part to purchase. Come out and see this "SUBDIVISION BEAUTIFUL." (Arizona Daily Star, El Montevideo Shows Phenomenal Success, May 4, 1930)

The district is located in close proximity to three prominent late 1920s and early 1930s neighborhoods and east of the Mission Revival El Conquistador Hotel (1925 – 1968) and east on Broadway Blvd. from the Broadway Village Shopping Center and the first Tucson Country Club.

In 2016 the El Montevideo National Register of Historic Places District was amended to include properties constructed the 1950s and 60s. The nomination notes that "The residences being added in this amendment are significant under Criteria A and C (the criteria of the 1990 nomination), at the local level. Primarily they are very good examples of prevalent, post-World War II, modern styles, the Ranch and Modern, with a few, regionally-appropriate, Sonoran Revival style residences included. While most appear to be builder- or owner-designed, there are excellent examples of the work of well-known Tucson architects among this group."

The NRHP nomination includes historical background and a context examining architectural development in the neighborhood from 1952-1961. The relevant sections of the nomination that apply to the Rubinstein House is excerpted here:

The 1950-1960 Decade in Tucson and Pima County (the following eight paragraphs are excerpted from text by Jim Ayres, historic archaeologist)

*As elsewhere in the United States, the end of World War II in 1945 brought about change to virtually every aspect of life in Tucson and southern Arizona. The ensuing*

*decade of the 1950s culminated a period of unprecedented development and growth in Tucson and Pima County that has not been matched since.*

*In 1945 the Pima County Board of Supervisors established the Post War Planning Board to help manage needed infrastructure improvements, such as housing development, that had been postponed. Likewise, civic leaders realized that the lifting of national restrictions on travel, on building materials and other war-required products would result in a surge of new development.*

*Wartime exposure of G .I.s to southern Arizona helped fuel the influx of population. Returning veteran families and the resultant baby boom required new housing and a large scale building explosion occurred. Whereas most of the building took place on formerly undisturbed land, considerable infilling in existing neighborhoods took place as well.*

*A broad array of city, county, state and federal initiatives were promulgated in the late 1940s and throughout the decade of the 1950s to address problems created by this post-war popUlation influx. These initiatives helped smooth the transition of Tucson from a relatively small community of nearly 45,500 in 1950 to one a decade later of nearly 213,000.*

*To control and direct development, in 1949 the Arizona Legislature established zoning authority in the state's two largest counties, Maricopa and Pima. Pima County created a commission to monitor and approve planning within the county, especially for those portions surrounding the City of Tucson. A county zoning plan was approved by voters in 1953.*

*Another aspect of development control related to annexation which was aggressively pursued by city officials between 1952 and 1960. During this period, 61.4 square miles were added to the city of Tucson. This figure includes the El Montevideo Neighborhood which was annexed in December 1955. The year 1955 has been singled out as a significant date in the development of El Montevideo because of annexation and the establishment of Ridge Subdivision (see following).*

*The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Veterans Administration (V A), both created in the 1930s, played important roles in the development of post-war 1950s Tucson by providing loan guarantees to home buyers. The FHA also set design standards. The FHA, builders and bankers became the driving force in shaping many residential subdivisions.*

*Also during the 1950s era of popUlation growth, the University of Arizona began a long term program to expand its facilities. Although not adjacent to the University, El*

*Montevideo has always been located near enough to attract university professors and their families.*

### El Montevideo Neighborhood During the 1950s Decade

During this era, the El Montevideo Neighborhood was annexed to the city and many of its remaining vacant lots were improved. As noted in the year 2000 National Register amendment, when 36 contributors were added to the historic district, El Montevideo's period of most rapid growth began in 1946. It continued through the 1950s just past 1960. Between 1946 and 1961, the total number of residences in the neighborhood increased by 61.5 percent.

As discussed in the prior nominations, nearby attractants to the El Montevideo Neighborhood were the El Conquistador Hotel and Randolph Park. Another significant, major attractant to the neighborhood was a new elementary school built nearby. Two blocks east of Alvermon, in the adjacent neighborhood, Peter Howell Elementary School was built in 1950 to serve a district that included the El Montevideo Neighborhood. Between 1950 and 1960, while Tucson experienced its greatest population growth, school construction struggled to accommodate this expansion. During this decade, the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) constructed three high schools and twenty-three elementary schools plus built additions to thirty-seven schools. A 1948 bond issue allowed for the construction of Peter Howell, among other schools.

According to Lester McCrary, the second principal of the school, Peter Howell was at first on double session owing to the acute shortage of schools. Meant to accommodate 750 students, the school handled 1,500 children and required forty-six teachers. By the second semester of 1954, relief came through the construction of nearby Lineweaver Elementary School and Peter Howell was able to get off double session. The school then had a steady student population and twenty-three teachers for the next twenty years. Mr. McCrary claims that the school reputedly served a "silk stocking area" because many professional people lived there.

Another response to the population influx was the establishment in 1955 of Ridge Subdivision in the unimproved northwest corner, the same year of annexation. As discussed in the 1994 nomination, the development of El Montevideo's subdivisions was originally controlled by deed restrictions. Early deed restrictions were commonly used in the United States to establish neighborhood character by controlling lot size, setback distances and minimum costs of construction. In addition, they were used to qualify prospective home buyers based on discriminatory principles. The 1930 deed restrictions for El Montevideo Estates and Ridgeland Resubdivision controlled development and were racially discriminatory. A 1948 Supreme Court ruling challenged such

discriminatory restrictions and in Ridge Subdivision's 1955 deed restrictions, discriminatory clauses were absent.

As mentioned in prior nominations, Ridge Subdivision was a re-subdivision of the upper end of Ridgeland Resubdivision, a 1930 re-subdivision of Blocks 9 and 10 of El Montevideo Estates. (See Ridge Subdivision map, Additional Items.) It was laid out by developer Forest Barr, the father-in-law of long-term resident Ira Larsen (#53), in a pattern of fourteen lots, seven of which surrounded the central feature, the Calle Guaymas cul-de-sac. The lots at the end of the cul-de-sac were wedge shaped. This cul-de-sac development added a third platting style to the neighborhood (see following). El Montevideo Estates had a grid, while Ridgeland Resubdivision had larger lots laid out along curvilinear Ridge Drive.

Deed restrictions for Ridge Subdivision had a minimum square footage of 1,400 square feet for residences on lots 9 through 14 and 1,200 square feet for those on lots 1 through 8. Thus the subdivision was laid out with the smaller lots north of the cul-de-sac and the larger to the south. Buildings were to be of masonry. Architect- and builder-designed styles appeared in Ridge Subdivision and included the mix of Modern, Ranch and Sonoran Revival.

The sewer ran beneath Calle Guaymas and deep water lines originally ran beneath the north and south alley segments. (In 1993-1994, the city replaced the old water mains. A new main was installed under the street.) Electric power from overhead lines on Camino del Norte have always run along the north and south alley segments.

It is significant that during this era of rapid growth, among the early neighborhood residents were people involved in construction. Glen C. Carpenter (#46) and Irving Rubinstein (#41) were building contractor/owners. Irving Manspeaker (#34) was the owner of Tucson's Midway Lumber Company. Ira Larsen (#53) had builder Forest Barr, his father-in-law and developer of Ridge Subdivision, assist in the construction of his home.

Other original owners identified include Albert and Rita Touche (#17), who owned and operated exclusive mens' and womens' apparel stores, under the name of Mills Touche, with branches in Tucson and Phoenix. Ira Larsen (#53) was a dentist. Opal Cornell (#21) was a hospital anesthesiologist. Several of the homes were built for single women. Albert Lent and his wife resided in the home they had built (#55), for many decades. Mr. Lent operated a livestock feed company. According to the current owner of #93, its original owner was a university professor. William and Thela Strickland have lived in # 18 since the mid 1950s. Mr. Strickland is a lawyer.

### **Architectural Development from 1952-1961 in the El Montevideo Neighborhood**

## Ridge Subdivision and the Neighborhood Plats

As mentioned, the El Montevideo Neighborhood incorporates three platting styles in its major subdivisions, El Montevideo Estates, Ridgeland Resubdivision and Ridge Subdivision. (The unsubdivided acreage is also a grid.) On relatively level terrain, not laid out by professional planners but by civil engineers working within the deed restrictions and local platting conventions, the plats are vernacular adaptations of commonly accepted traditions. These plats were implemented by developers responsible for subdividing the land and selling the lots speculatively.

The grid of El Montevideo Estates is a very commonly accepted platting tradition in Tucson as well as the United States (originally a response from the Land Ordinance of 1785) that fostered speculation. Ridgeland Resubdivision, laid out along a curvilinear drive, is a very minimal interpretation of the organic planning tradition which sprang not only from natural human settlement practices but also from the nineteenth-century Parks Movement. A cul-de-sac was an obvious solution for Ridge Subdivision since the property boundary restricted the passage of Calle Guaymas to the west. Cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets created a sense of enclosure, considered desirable in platting since the late nineteenth century. The sense of enclosure derived from the pioneering work of landscape architect Frederick L. Olmsted and other designers and theorists.

## The Residences

Most properties built in El Montevideo from 1930 until the outbreak of World War II were Southwestern Revivals, very much in vogue during the first decades of the 20th Century. In El Montevideo and elsewhere in the nation, most domestic building ceased during the war years. When construction resumed in 1946, there was a strong tendency to favor variations of the modern styles. In Tucson the predominant post-World War II residential styles were, in order of magnitude, the California Ranch (reflecting Arizona's historic and economic ties to the West) and the Modern. In a less pronounced fashion, revivalist architecture, especially that based upon Hispanic precedents, like Sonoran (Territorial) Revival, continued to be built in Tucson and Pima County subdivisions.

Influenced by the FHA, which imposed design standards to ensure building value, housing of this era blended an open interior plan, space for new, modern appliances and new storage facilities and provisions for outdoor living. The prototypical California Ranch style house incorporated these features and conformed well to the FHA guidelines.

Architectural expression in Tucson after World War II was also affected by the development of modernism as a national architectural movement. The arrival of modern architecture in Tucson was attributed to three architects, Art Brown, William Wilde and

Nicholas Sakellar. Their new materials and forms contrasted sharply with the revivalist architectural expression still prevalent. While these architects designed larger projects, they were also responsible for some very unique, contemporary houses. More modest, builder-designed Modern style residences also became popular.

In spite of the proliferation of Ranch and Modern residences in the community, there remained architects, builders and clientele that still preferred the pre-war, revivalist styles, especially in the "Hispanic" mode. A popular variant was the parapeted, flat facade house, frequently of burnt adobe, known as Sonoran Revival, which owners referred to as "Territorial."

## Significance and Description of the Architectural Styles

### Modern Style (1940-1980)

Modern architecture developed from a number of roots in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There was a need for new building types, a growing development of new technologies and materials and a desire for more practical and beautiful building design.

Changes were seen in the work of Wagner, Berlage, Behmes and McIntosh in Europe, in the English Arts and Crafts movement and in the buildings of Sullivan and Wright in the United States. Wright's outstanding work became known in Europe through the 1911 edition of a publication called the Wendingen.

In the 1920s, a radical new architecture, the International style, developed in Europe. The style attempted to be a universal expression of modern life. Buildings were simplified and, influenced by Cubism, often treated as sculptural artifacts, white and geometric. Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius were early proponents. Mies van der Rohe created a variation using interactive planes of masonry and glass to create buildings of extraordinary beauty. The style spread throughout Europe and the United States.

In the United States, modern architecture at first appeared most prominently in the skyscraper design and other commercial buildings of the 1930s, but in the post-war period, the Modern style developed in residential design through the work of innovative architects and was most favored for custom designed houses built between 1950 and 1970. This style evolved from the International style and the Craftsman and Prairie styles as well as from the traditional Japanese pavilion, rural Alpine and Scandinavian forms and from the early indigenous western ranch architecture which also inspired the Ranch style.

The Modern style is based on certain intellectual premises relating to design, construction and the use of materials. Houses are designed with a strong concern for

functional relationships. The style is characterized by two distinctive subtypes based on roof shape, flat or gabled, although shed and hip roofed examples can be found. Flat-roofed modern houses resemble the International style except that natural materials - particularly wood, brick and stone - frequently are used. Gable forms feature overhanging eaves and roofs and solid-void wall relationships arranged to create an indoor-outdoor spatial connection using glass as an invisible barrier. Often, space is manipulated to create a feeling of dynamic spatial flow. Also, there can be an attempt to integrate the house into the landscape rather than to contrast with it, as in the International style.

Modern residences often reveal the structure or form of the house in traits like sloped ceilings. They also feature glazed gables. They generally emphasize open planning except for bedrooms. The use of partitions and space dividers that do not go up to the ceiling is another trait.

In Tucson, starting in the post-war period, architects designed custom houses in the Modern style. The desert climate was a strong influence on design. Roof overhangs to create shade and other solar protective features were used. For solar protection, buildings were sited with solid walls facing east and west and with glazed areas facing north and south. Glazing usually occurred in strip windows and in large glazed areas rather than in individual windows. Walls were built using masonry and stucco and the use of wood, which is damaged by the sun, was minimized.

## **Conclusion**

The building boom triggered by the Post World War II population influx and housing shortage manifested itself in Tucson as an era of unprecedented growth, especially between 1950 and 1960. The previously established neighborhood of El Montevideo in Pima County likewise grew substantially during this relatively brief era, through infill of many of its vacant lots, establishment of a new subdivision and annexation to the city. With nearby attractants like Peter Howell School and Randolph Park to lure new families, post-war homes sprouted up between the older houses and in the new subdivision. As has been noted, most residences were in the popular modern styles but a few were in the Hispanic revival tradition. Over the years, these fine additions to the stylistically eclectic neighborhood have matured with their landscaping and continue to contribute to the cohesive character of the El Montevideo Neighborhood. The period of significance for this historic district has been expanded to 1961 because this end date capped, with a mini construction boom, a decade of intense growth in the neighborhood. The boundary increase allows for the inclusion of Ridge Subdivision and some unsubdivided acreage, always part of the entity commonly understood as El Montevideo Neighborhood, so that all properties built in 1961 or earlier can be included.

The Rubinstein House was one of a small cluster of residential modernist projects designed by Sylvia (died in 1954) and William Wilde on Calle Fernando in El Montevideo Estates including the 1953 butterfly house for Mr. and Mrs. John M. Nicholl at 3837 Calle Fernando and the 1951 Dr. Bernard Pasternack House at 3826 East Calle Fernando. The Dr. Bernard Pasternack House also included a Japanese inspired garden by noted landscape architect Guy Greene. Homes editor for the Arizona Daily Star, Charlotte Cardon noted that the Pasternack House was, "Small in scale it has excellent design and the quality of workmanship is so superior (cabinet work in the kitchen and bath are curly maple finished like fine furniture) that only change needed over a period of years has been the perfecting of details. The design and construction remain undated and have an always usable freshness. (Cardon, Charlotte, Simple Contemporary Styling Creates Serene Atmosphere, Arizona Daily Star, September 3, 1961)



Rubinstein House, entryway, entry wall and built in cabinetry, photo by Bill Sears.

The Rubinstein House was extensively published after it was constructed, including on the cover of the Home and Features section of the Arizona Daily Star on March 1, 1959 and the featured cover story in the Tucson Daily Citizen Homes section written by editor Mary Brown on August 28, 1965. (Brown, Mary, Open Planning Featured Home, Tucson Daily Citizen, August 28, 1965). The William Wilde-designed prefabricated fireplace called the Space-Planner which was manufactured in Tucson and included in the design of the Rubinstein House was named on the “top 15 new products in 1960” by Building Products Magazine and won honors at the convention of the National Association of Home Builders in Chicago. (Arizona Daily Star, Wilde Design Honored, February 12, 1961)

## **Rubinstein House**

The Rubinstein House was the culmination of design ideas developed and promoted by William and Sylvia Wilde in the early 1950s. Starting the early 1953 the Wildes began developing a residential design concept and philosophy they called the "Space-Planner." The design was conceived for "Arizona city living." The concept employed fences and landscaping to screen undesirable views, provide shade from the late afternoon sun and permit a view of the mountains. The open floor plan concept provided three patios to insure privacy, two terraces offer adult relaxation and playroom for children. (Arizona Daily Star, The 'Space-Planner' House. August 2, 1953.) The Arizona Daily Star Homes and Building section featured the concept over a number of weeks starting in August 1953. In first issue highlighting the residential concept the Wildes offered their design philosophy in creating the "Space-Planner" (Wilde, Sylvia and William, Wildes Present Their Philosophy of Design, Arizona Daily Star, August 2, 1953):

**In formulating** a program for the design of a home for a specific client there are more or less definite requirements and conditions which have to be met and dealt with. There are conditioned by client's needs, like and dislikes, their budget, location and condition of the land, the emotional response they evoke, and underlying all this is the designers' philosophy of living, esthetics, and building.

**Since the program** for this home had to be based on imaginary clients, it was defined by goals based on our philosophy of design, and our view of Tucson's living. No attempt has been made to show an ultimate in design because we don't believe there could be such a design. Instead, we have aimed at a house that would meet as much as possible the requirements arising from the ever changing life around us, and at the same time offer a retreat from its pressure.

**Life about us** is in a constant flux - the movement of the earth, the position of the sun though the day, the changes of the seasons, the children growing up into adolescents, then one day leaving the house - first for short periods, then to a set up homes and families of their own, All these changes and development, plus changes in our social and economic ways of living, call for a house capable to meet ever-changing requirements of home life.

**As long as design** evaluation standards were based on tradition, habit, the path of least sales resistance and sometime on just ignorance, it was not possible to get much more in a house than sound construction, prevalent conveniences and several one purpose rooms. Such houses, countless numbers of which stretch from coast to coast, ranging from modest bungalows to elaborate mansions have one quality in common - they are static, inflexible, and outdated from the day they are built. There never-changing

sameness does have a sense of emotional security, like an old habit, but their occupants always need a change of scenery.



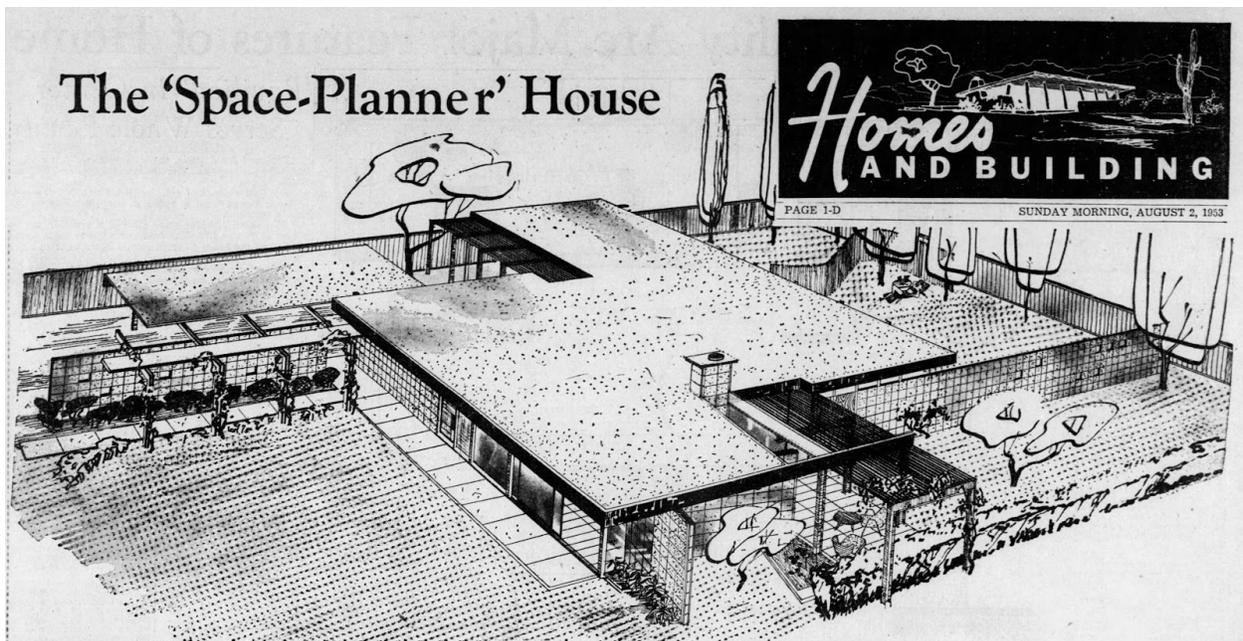
Rubinstein House, living room looking into kitchen, photo by Bill Sears.

**There is prevalent**, an idea that everyone desires an individualized home. Yet hundreds of tract houses are being bought with hardly any individuality. Even in more expensive subdivisions the difference are very slight. The fact that most houses are referred to as two- or three-bedroom houses is an indication that very little else can distinguish them from each other. We think that what most people really want and justifiably so, is less monotony and an opportunity for self expression.

**To alleviate** monotony some builders reverse house plans, change location of carport or garage, add or remove monr exterior details, change colors, vary facing materials, or change the position of the house in relation to the street. Flopping over the plan of the house is with very few exceptions probably the worst method of all. It doesn't really change the appearance of the house and if the plan is well oriented in one position then

there reversed position is not as good. Surface changes are apparent only after some analysis and therefore the general sameness and monotony of the street is still there.

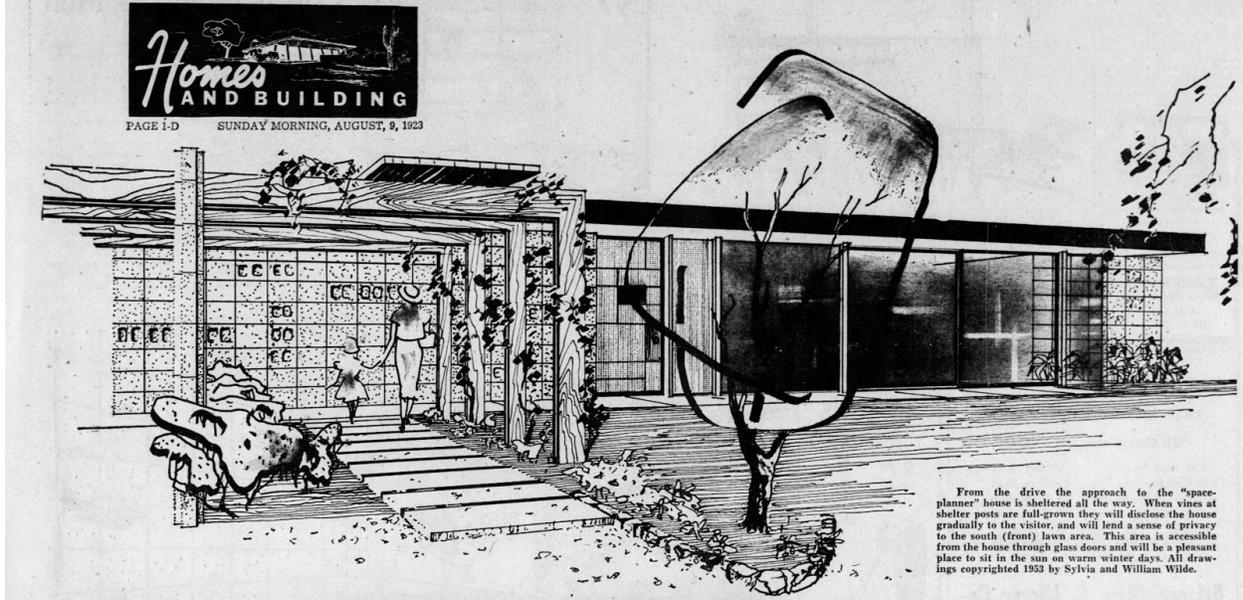
**Variation in position** of the house and the carport in relation to each other as well as in relation to lot lines, having several different plans to work with, and at the same time retaining similarity of basic design factors such as materials and methods of construction, can create a harmonious and interesting neighborhood. The special relationship of solid and voids would offer many and varied, constantly changing views of the house groups without destroying its sense of unity. Landscaping, whether indigenous or planted, and outdoor structures play a great part in imparting a sense of individuality to a home and still keep it within a unified group of neighboring houses.



*Sylvia and William Wilde "space-planner" home copyright 1953. Arizona Daily Star August 2, 1953.*

The Arizona Daily Star series looked at numerous variations of the "Space-Planner" for various budgets including the "Space-Planner 10-53." The homes focused on indoor-outdoor continuity and efficient use of space. The designs included: "Exterior walls are of glass where light and visibility are desired and of insulating concrete masonry units used elsewhere. [...] From the street, the house presents an unpretentious but dignified appearance, accenting privacy and suggesting a full use of the lot for outdoor living." (Arizona Daily Star, Wildes Offer Home Design for Housing Developments, March 21, 1954).

# Land, Building Unity Aim of 'Space Planner' House



From the drive the approach to the "space-planner" house is sheltered all the way. When vines at shelter posts are full-grown they will disclose the house gradually to the visitor, and will lend a sense of privacy to the south (front) lawn area. This area is accessible from the house through glass doors and will be a pleasant place to sit in the sun on warm winter days. All drawings copyrighted 1953 by Sylvia and William Wilde.

Sylvia and William Wilde "space-planner" home copyright 1953. *Arizona Daily Star* August 9, 1953.

In early September of 1954 Sylvia Wilde unexpectedly died while recovering from a surgery in Chicago. William continued the architectural practice and the design philosophy the couple had developed. Within this period, in 1954, Wilde designed the Rubinstein house and construction was completed in 1955. The project required a Pima County Board of Adjustment District No. 1 hearing and approval to build the home with deficient side yards. Case 55-15. (*Arizona Daily Star*, Pima County Board of Adjustment, Feb 2, 1955).

Charlotte Cardon, the *Arizona Daily Star*, Homes Section writer described the house in the March 1, 1959 edition. The cover feature provided a detailed description of the character defining features of the house:

The complete informality of this house and the important place that children have in it are immediately apparent upon entering the charming entrance patio shaded by translucent plastic panels overhead. An example of what can be accomplished by an architect and contractor working together [...] The house was planned to give the illusion of great open space while confined to the limitations of a city lot. A total use of this space included the outlook from all corners of the house to the far extremities of the lot which is enclosed on three sides with a high wall.

The approach is up a path of staggered rectangular concrete slabs, through an arch of open latticework. The flat room is stepped back to reduce the visual thickness, and there is a generous overhang to protect the expansive glass areas against the desert

sun. Plants grown against the openwork gate and wall which is a replica minus glass of the front entrance. This is broken up in an abstract geometric design. The front hall overlooks the living -dining rooms where a section of the roof has been raised to form clerestory windows for interior light. The open lattice-work of the walkway continues through the house and out the terrace door at the rear of the living room.



Rubinstein House, kitchen looking east., photo by Bill Sears.

Few of the interior walls are fixed and permanent. Those enclosing the baths, and the one backing the raised hearth free-standing fireplace are the only ones immovable. The rest are sliding panels which makes the house a flexible model of openness. In the children's room, the central panel can be slid back the end panels put aside and the whole section thrown into a large play area supervised from the kitchen.

The kitchen is an aisle plan, marked off from the living -dining rooms by a counter with open storage shelves hung from above for table service, available from either side.

The living room faces the rear terrace and has sliding glass walls on to entire sides. These can be opened to give an extraordinary indoor-outdoor impression, which the terrace becoming a part of the living room. The left end of this 29-foot long room is used for dining.



Rubinstein House, children's wing, photo by Bill Sears.

The master bedroom on the right rear corner of the house opens on the terrace. Sliding doors separate this room from the living room. The master bath has a sunken tub of polished terrazzo. The outer wall of the bath is full length sliding glass doors. Outside this wall is a seeming extension of the tub is a lily pool.

At the front of the house in a den that doubles as a guest room with bath attached and a private entrance from the front patio. This corner also contains the air conditioning and utilities room, accessible from the outside.

Mary Brown, homes editor for the Tucson Daily Citizen also provided a detailed description of the property for that paper in 1965:

Novel handling of ceilings, extensive use of glass, and sliding wall panels which permit opening up large areas or closing them off into individual rooms. [...] The home, designed by architect William Wilde and built by Mr. Rubinstein, who is himself a contractor, was planned for the specific needs of a family with small children where it would be possible to keep an eye on the youngsters during daytime hours yet achieve privacy and quiet for the whole family when desired.

There's a continuity of space in the house due partly to the use of glass and to the low and high ceilings which in most parts of the house are 9 ½ feet high but in the living room soar to a height of 13 feet because of the raised roof in this area. The latter rests on four concrete pillars painted a Chinese red.

Contemporary in style, the home has an Oriental feeling due probably to the restraint used in the furnishings, the atrium through which one enters the foyer and an indoor planter between foyer and living room from which bougainvillea twines through the shelves above the planter and along an open lattice work which extends from the front of the house through the living room and into the patio beyond. The atrium too is lush with growing plants.

Wall to the south and east is entirely of glass and a 6-foot overhang on this side as well as around most of the house provides sun control as well as privacy.



Rubinstein House, entry wall exterior,, photo by Bill Sears.

In all, Mr. Rubinstein estimates there is something over 1400 square feet of glass utilized in the home some of which is accounted for in the clerestory windows between the living room roof and the lower roof elevation on the rest of the house. By opening the window walls to the south and east into the terrace and patio beyond, the indoors and outdoors sweep together in an amazing living and play area. Part of the wall between the living room and the master bedroom to the west also is movable so that Mrs. Rubinstein when all walls are open has a visual command of almost any part of the home.



Rubinstein House, entry sequence,, photo by Bill Sears.

Outstanding feature of the home from a housewife's point of view is the storage space most of which is built-in. An aisle-plan kitchen is marked off from the living-dining area by a counter with open storage shelves hung from above providing a pass-through for easy serving. Service entrance is at one end of the kitchen convenient not only to that part of the the house but also the children's' wing and bath. East end of the the 29-foot living area is given over the dining area of the home.

Adjustable standards with shelving from a demarcation between the foyer and living room above the indoor planter. More shelves and built-in cabinets on the east side of the living room allow additional storage areas.

The children's' wing was built for daughter, Lori and sons Dave and Ricky, and can be divided by the movable wall panels into three spacious bedrooms for the youngsters yet when the panels are slid back a tremendous play and recreation area for the children is available. Each bedroom is well-equipped with wall hung cabinets, desks and drawers. Wardrobes off each bedroom also contain built-in drawers and shelves.

Steel ranch windows hinged on top to open below are used on the east wall of the boys' rooms and clerestory windows start about 7 feet above and 9 ½ feet again providing privacy but still allowing a glimpse of the Catalinas to the north. Children's bath has free-hung wall cabinets for storage and is done in an oatmeal tile in light and dark tone combinations with picture insets of Mexican tile here and there.

Ceilings throughout the home are 1 by 4's in vertical grain fir.

Some generous storage areas are used in the master bedroom suite where an adjoining bath opens to the west through a window wall into a private patio. The sunken terrazzo tub in the bath is matched with a sunken lily pond outside the window and the ceramic tile on the wall continues though on the patio wall to create another effect of space and continuity.

Patio to the south is surrounded by a six foot brick wall stepped in several places to provide visual privacy. A gate at the north-east of the house provides entrance to the patio as well as to a children's play area on that side where again a wall of built-ins offer space for storage of toys and plaything for the youngsters.

Outside construction is red brick combined with glass and woodwork throughout is of birch. Seven and one-half tons of refrigeration units cool the house in summer and in winter because of its placement and the wide use of glass, very little heat is needed except at night with rays of the sun providing most of the daytime warmth.

In the northwest corner of the home is a den complete with adjoining bath. This also could be used as an office since a separate door opens into the entrance patio. This corner also contains the air conditioning and utility room accessible from the outside.

Open planning of the home results from the post and beam construction with main beams running from the front to the rear and supported by the round concrete posts. (Brown, Mary, Open Planning Features Home, Tucson Daily Citizen, August 28, 1965)

## **William Wilde (1904-1984)**

William Wilde (1904-1984) was born Wolff Goldstein in Moghilev, Russia (Ukraine) on January 1, 1904. He participated in the Bolshevik Revolution fleeing the Czarist reign into western Europe. He studied architecture before immigrating to the United States on February 2, 1923. He settled in Providence R.I. enrolling in the Rhode Island School of Design. In 1928 he changed name to William Wilde.

## **Sylvia Wilde (1907-1957)**

Sylvia Wilde (1907-1957) was born in 1907 in (Ukraine), Russia, and after the war escaped with her family through Siberia living in Mukden and then moving to Japan where she developed a lifelong interest in design. She would recall later in an interview, "Those wonderful, airy buildings in Japan! Movable partitions, whole new conceptions of living space, clean sweeping lines. They opened up a whole new world to me." She traveled throughout Asia and immigrated to the United States through San Francisco. She moved to Providence, Rhode Island and met William. They married in 1928 and by 1934 opened their first architectural and industrial design office in Westfield, New Jersey.

In a post WWII interview Sylvia reminisced, "When I came to this country I had to learn a new language. I am still learning, for language has many nuances and fine shadings which give it meaning. The same is true of design. One has constantly to feel the appropriate, useful, beautiful, and weave them into a pattern for living. That is designing."

In New Jersey they blended the emerging avant-garde European international style and American tastes to create a portfolio of work that garnered regional and national attention. For Sylvia and William the interior and landscaping were as important as the exterior of a building, they developed a vision of congruity and they believed the design elements needed to flow from one into the other. In 1936/37 the couple collaborated on the Mary Ellis House at 1629 South County Trail in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. The house was immediately recognized as architecturally significant and was published in the History of Rhode Island Architecture. The Ellis House is considered the best example of International Style houses built in Rhode Island and was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

The couple moved to Tucson in 1946. In southern Arizona they opened a new office and were hired in 1947 to design the El Siglo Apartment. The FHA-Insured project was led by Albert Oshrin of Oshrin Building and Development Company. The development was located east of Alvernon Way near Haynes Street behind what is today the DoubleTree Hotel. The 20-acre project included freestanding rental homes with landscape by John Harlow. The first phase included 12 units which opened in 1948 which under Federal Housing Administration regulations which gave WWII veterans priority. The houses ranged in size from 3 ½ to 5 ½ rooms – brick and glass construction with central heating, cooling. Each with a carport. Price

was \$90 to \$130 a month. Project was financed through \$534,750 FHA loan; the largest granted any builder in the state of Arizona at the time it was made. In 1948 they oversaw the design of Freedom Village, a 160-acre 450-home development, created by Freedom Homes, Inc. at Indian School (Ajo) and Valley Road.

In 1951 the Wildes were commissioned to design the home of Harold Rappaport at 1501 East Spring Street. The expansive glass, movable walls and rhythmic form of house was a innovative design approach that received national and international attention. The home was featured in the July 1948 issue of Architectural Forum and the July issue of British published Ideal Home. Every element of the Rappaport house was designed by the Wildes including the china and silver.

In an interview they ruminated, "People call us modernists. If using modern materials and techniques and employing them to the best use we have constitutes modernism, then we are. After all, we live in a particular era, and we want to express it, the same as people of all ages have. There is so much new in our own period that just begs to be utilized in design." The attention and critical acclaim helped grow their practice and attracted clients looking for innovative cutting edge modern design. Their office which they called "H.R. 30," was located at 415 (413) East Fifth Street.

During this period, Sylvia designed buildings, furniture and fabrics. Cele Peterson, fashion icon and client, described Sylvia in September 1952 as: The way Sylvia Wilde accepts the new....it's tomorrow just talking to her! Her whole vision is marvelous, daring, foresighted!" Sylvia developed cancer and died in 1954 at the age of 47 in Chicago, while recovering from surgery.

Wilde's designs from this period forward take on a more masculine and structural character. In 1958 Wilde developed a concept-project for the addition to Harlow's Nursery. The open air building was one of the first thin-shell concrete structure poured in Tucson. The design gave the building the appearance of floating, Wilde worked with Johannessen, Girand and Taylor consulting engineers and construction on the project was completed by Jaco Construction Co.

The 1966 Wilde was selected to design the new NASA Planetary Science building on the University of Arizona campus. The design used six-ton precast concrete components that functioned as a column, a window and a spandrel beam. The four story building was financed by National Aeronautics and Space Administration Building at a cost \$1.2M and was considered at the time a pioneering structure for US colleges.

1970 Wilde said, "the time of great people doing things by themselves is gone. Everyone today must be a part of the community, part of a team and this holds with architects. . Architects today can't practice today without going beyond what a city looks like. They must understand its problems. They must understand behaviorism. Architects today must concentrate on the real needs of the public – the needs that people do not themselves realize they need."

In May of 1978 Wilde announced his retirement from the firm of Wilde Anderson DeCartolo Pan Architecture Inc and began the consulting firm William Wilde AIA, continuing to impact projects and design in Southern Arizona until his death in 1984.

### **Irving David Rubinstein (1922 - 2016)**

Born July 30, 1922 in Bronx, New York Rubinstein moved to Tucson in the early 1940s. He served in the Army during WWII and then started a 40-year construction career. Rubinstein was noted as working for and with architect William Wilde. He married Harriet Handelman on September 11, 1950. The couple had three children David, Rick and Lori. In the mid 1950's he started his own general contracting firm which he ran until his retirement in 1989. In 1964 Rubinstein served as second vice president of the Tucson Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute.

In 1968 Rubinstein collaborated with Wilde to construct the the Aero-Tech Inc. plant in Tucson. The 30,000 square ft, \$250,000 factory and warehouse and executive office building was located on South Tucson Boulevard.

Rubinstein was a long time member of the Tucson Soaring Club and was instrumental in the building of the El Tiro Glider Port. He was also an avid sailor and a 45-year member of the Coronado Yacht Club, living on his boat for 25 years, until he was 91. Rubinstein died on February 29, 2016. (Arizona Jewish Post, Irving Rubinstein Obituary, March 18, 2016.)

Included is a list of noted projects built by Rubinstein:

1954 Glenn Thompson Appliance Company Store, 3828 East Speedway. (Architect, Russell Hastings)  
1957 Wakefield Junior High School remodeling.  
1958 Kane Estates Model Contemporary House (Architects, D.S. Swanson, AIA)  
1959 Lutheran Church of the King, 2340 South Kolb Road (Architect, Edward H. Nelson)  
1960 Liberty Elementary School addition, Sunnyside School District.  
1960 Tucson City Jail Farm Annex (Architect, Swanson and Ambrose)  
1963 Sabino Canyon Visitor Center  
1963 Elks Lodge Bisbee, (Architect, Frederick Knipe)  
1963 Keenan Pipe & Supply Co., 2845 N. Flowing Wells Road (Architect, Friedman and Jobusch)  
1964 Canyon del Oro High School Home Economics Building  
1964 Santa Catalina UA Lunar and Planetary Laboratory 60-in telescope dome.  
1967 Environmental Research Facility, Tucson International Airport

### **Integrity**

As defined in the National Register Bulletin, How to apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, integrity is defined as: “the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the National Register criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of

integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance.”

The historic building retains all seven aspects integrity including Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling and Association.

**1. Location.** Built in the El Montevideo Estates (NRHP listed), the home was constructed on a lot set back from the street. The house remains in its original location.

**2. Design.** Mr. Rubinstein commissioned Tucson architect William Wilde to design this modern home on a city lot within the El Montevideo Estates subdivision. As an outstanding example of Modern style, the home exemplifies interior and exterior living. The design coupled with exceptional craftsmanship and detailing create a distinctive sense of place that epitomises mid-twentieth century Tucson. In the 1978 the carport was converted into living space.

**3. Setting.** Rubinstein House retains its original suburban residential setting. Subsequent development during the depression and post-WWII era created an eclectic residential neighborhood with the Rubinstein House serving an architectural anchor of the post WWII era.

**4. Materials.** The materials remain the same from the period of construction. Limited alterations have remained true to the original material palette.

**5. Workmanship.** The quality of workmanship is intact; the original craftsmanship with which the residential building was built is still present, details such as exposed material details, birch cabinets, builtins, exterior details, window framing, bathroom caseworks and terrazzo. Throughout the building there is an exceptional workmanship and finish details. The distinct interior/exterior finish work and treatment are an outstanding examples of the mid-century design.

**6. Feeling.** The sense of place persists, including the subdivision streetscape. The high degree of integrity supports the retention of feeling.

**7. Association.** The historic associations of the property have remained intact; very few modifications have been made to the original design. The few details changes have included an overcoating on the floor and enclosure of the carport into a guest suite.

**The building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance.**

### **Contemporary Context**

The Rubinstein House was purchased in 2018 and a preservation plan developed to protect the character features, the property is concurrently undergoing careful rehabilitation and restoration.

The interior and exterior details rehabilitated to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

In April 2015 the Rubinstein House was the featured property on the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation Tucson Modernism Week Home Tour. Annually, this tour highlights some of the most significant architecture from Tucson's post WWII, the homes are carefully chosen and curated for their significance and ability to convey the various community historic contexts. The Rubinstein House was included for its significance and interior and exterior integrity.

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### **Contemporary Photographs**

- 001 North Elevation, 2015, photo by Jude Ignacio and Gerardine Vargas
- 002 North Elevation entry, 2015, photo by Jude Ignacio and Gerardine Vargas  
Front garden hardscape detail
- 003 Interior south facing window wall, looking west, 2015, photo by Jude Ignacio and Gerardine Vargas
- 004 Rear pergola system, looking south, 2015, photo by Jude Ignacio and Gerardine Vargas
- 005 Master bathroom and window wall, looking northwest, 2015, photo by Jude Ignacio and Gerardine Vargas
- 006 Master bedroom, looking southwest , 2015, photo by Jude Ignacio and Gerardine Vargas
- 007 Dining room, kitchen and east window wall, looking east, 2015, photo by Jude Ignacio and Gerardine Vargas
- 008 Living room into master bedroom, looking west, 2015, photo by Jude Ignacio and Gerardine Vargas
- 009 North Elevation, 2018, photo by Demion Clinco
- 010 South Elevation, 2018, photo by Demion Clinco
- 011 East Elevation, 2018, photo by Demion Clinco
- 012 West Elevation, 2018, photo by Demion Clinco
- 013 Rear Garden hardscape detail, looking southeast, photo by Demion Clinco

Photo 001



Photo 002



Photo 003



Photo 004



Photo 005



Photo 006



Photo 007



Photo 008





Photo 009



Photo 010



Photo 011



Photo 012



Photo 013

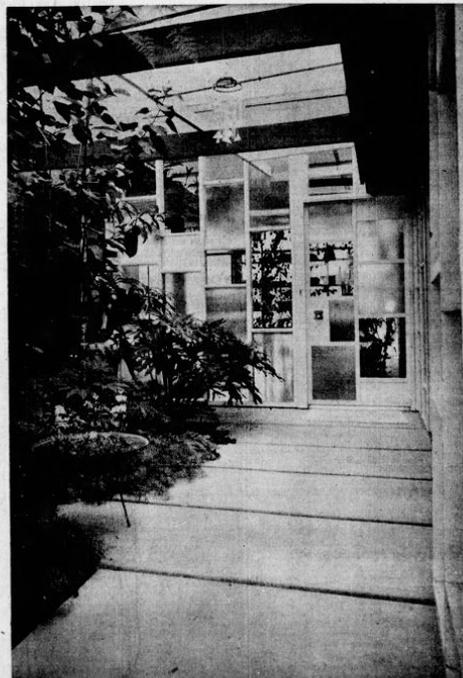
The Arizona Daily Star  
**Homes and Features**

PAGE ONE — SECTION C

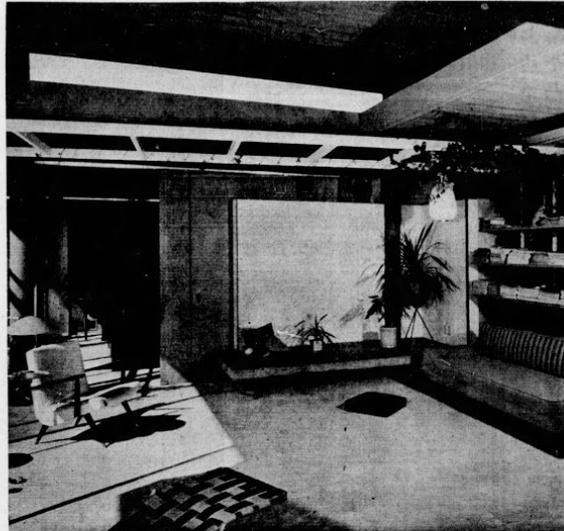
SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 1959



Generous overhang protects glasswork from desert sun



Approach to home is through an arch of open latticework



Living room faces rear terrace in Irving D. Rubinstein home

# One Of Tucson Homes On Fine Arts Tour

By CHARLOTTE CARDON  
 The Tucson Fine Arts Assn. will be showing this house on the March 13th Tour of Homes as an outstanding example of contemporary architecture designed by a Tucson architect for a general contractor and his family.  
 The complete informality of this house and the impressive glass that children have in it are immediately apparent upon entering the charming entrance patio shaded by translucent plastic panels overhead. An example of what can be accomplished by an architect and contractor working together, this home on Calle Fernando was designed by William White for the Irving D. Rubinsteins.  
 The house was planned to give the illusion of great open space while confined to the limitations of a city lot. A real use of this space

includes the outlook from all corners of the house to the far extension of the lot which is enclosed on three sides with a high wall.  
 The approach is up a path of staggered, rectangular concrete slabs, through an arch of open latticework. The flat roof is stepped back to reduce the visual thickness, and there is a generous overhang to protect the expansive glass areas against the desert sun. Plants grow against the openwork gate and wall which is a replica, minus glass of the front entrance. This is broken up in an abstract geometrical design. The front hall overlooks the living-dining rooms where a section of the roof has been raised to form clerestory windows for interior light. The open latticework of the walkway continues through the house and

out the terrace door at the rear of the living room.  
 Two of the interior walls are fixed and permanent. Those enclosing the baths, and the one backing the raised hearth free standing fireplace are the only ones immovable. The rest are sliding panels which makes the house a flexible model of openness. In the children's room, the central panel can be slid back, the end panels put aside and the whole section thrown into a large play area supervised from the kitchen.  
 The kitchen is an aisle plan, marked off from the living-dining room by a counter with open storage shelves hung from above for table service, available from either side.  
 The living room faces the rear terrace and has sliding glass walls on two entire sides. These can be

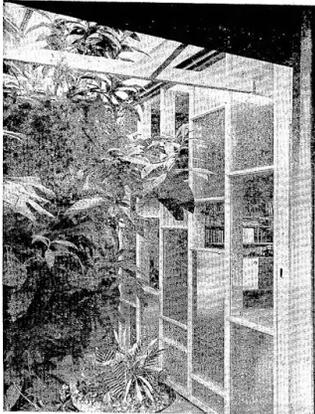
opened to give an extraordinary indoor-outdoor impression, with the terrace becoming a part of the living room. The left end of this 26 foot long room is used for dining.  
 The master bedroom on the right rear corner of the house opens on the terrace. Sliding doors separate this room from the living room. The master bath has a sunken tub of polished terrazzo. The rear wall of the bath is full length sliding glass doors. Outside the wall is a screening extension of the tub in a lily pool.  
 At the front of the house is a den that doubles as a guest room with bath attached and a private entrance from the front patio. This corner also contains the air conditioning and utility room, accessible from the outside.



Kitchen separated from living-dining area by open storage shelves

# Open Planning Features Home

By Mary Brown  
Citizen Home Editor



ABOVE: Front entrance panel of clear and obscure glass in a random pattern marks the home of the Irving D. Rubinsteins. This view is taken from the den through the atrium and into the bookcase wall of the living room. BELOW: Large bookcase wall is seen here from the foyer. Free hung storage cabinets line the wall beneath the book shelves. Kitchen of the home is behind that wall.

Novel handling of walls, extensive use of glass, and sliding wall panels which permit opening up large areas for dining, den, and living room and the lower level are the outstanding aspects in the home of the Irving D. Rubinsteins, 3838 Calle Fernando.

The home, designed by architect William White and built by the Rubinsteins, was planned for the specific needs of a family with small children which would be possible to keep an eye on the youngsters during daytime hours yet provide privacy and quiet for the whole family.

There's a continuity of space in the home due partly to the use of glass and to the four and high ceilings which in most spots of the house are 11, six high in the living room area. A height of 13 feet increases at the dining room level. The latter ends at four concrete pillars painted in Chinese red.

Contemporary in style, the home has an Oriental feeling due probably to the equivalent used in the furnishings, the screens through which one sees the living and dining rooms which separate the living and dining rooms from the kitchen, and the sliding panels above the play area and along an open staircase which extends from the foyer of the house through the living room and into the main house. The screen is in both walls.

Free of the interior walls are fixed and permanent. Wall without the fixed screen where a free standing fireplace is placed in the living room and those enclosing the bath are the only permanent walls. All the rest are sliding panels which make the home a flexible structure.

Wall in the south and east is entirely of glass and a fixed covering on this side will allow most of the house provides an overhang wall in every room.

In all, Mr. Rubinsteins estimates there is

something over 1400 square feet of glass which is in the home some of which is mounted in the living room and the lower level are the outstanding aspects in the home of the Rubinsteins. The sliding wall panels which permit opening up large areas for dining, den, and living room and the lower level are the outstanding aspects in the home of the Rubinsteins, 3838 Calle Fernando.

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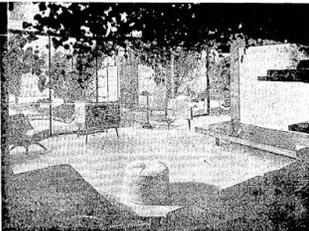
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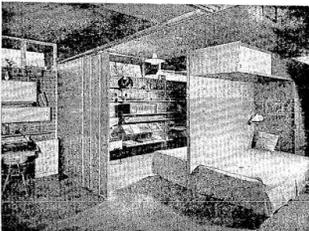
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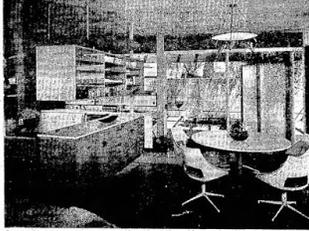
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ABOVE: Nonpermanent trellis the trellis above into the living room from an indoor planter in the foyer. Screen beyond (left) patio are provided stainless panels on a trellis framework which gives separation between living room patio and the bedroom patio. These can be turned for access or for air flow.



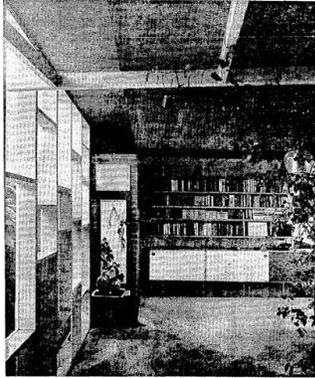
ABOVE: Children's wing may be opened up into one large area or closed off into separate bedrooms by sliding panels. Each child has built-in shelves for books, cabinets and desks as well as large wardrobes with built-in drawers.



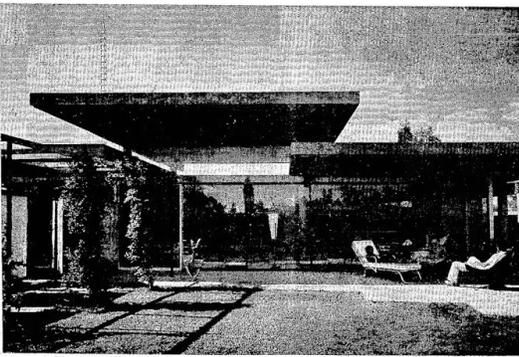
ABOVE: The Formica topped pedestal dining table is mounted into concrete on the floor. Vinyl asbestos tile is used in dining and kitchen areas. Electric and telephone outlets are mounted beneath the table.

ON THE COVER: Unusually sized concrete slabs mark the approach to the home of the Irving D. Rubinsteins at 3838 Calle Fernando. The slabs continue through this atrium which opens into the foyer of the home. The trellis above starts at the entry, continues through the house and into the rear patio.

Photos By Bill Sears

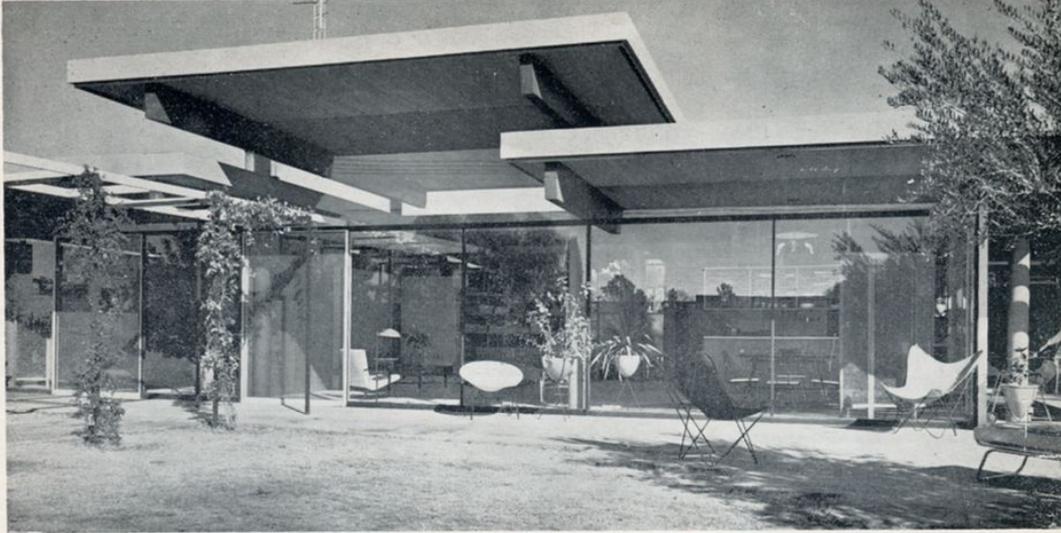


PAGE 46



ABOVE: South and patio side of the house shows the two levels of the home. The Rubinsteins with son Dave chat on the porch which spans the rear of the house. Higher 12-foot roof in living room, rises on four concrete pillars.

PAGE 47



*A major feature in the design of this Tucson home is the continuous expanse of glass across the back. The split-level roof allows for glass panels in upper walls of some rooms.*

## *This Tucson home*

Frank Gaynor



*Alternating translucent and clear glass squares form the front door and adjacent wall in the entry. Beams overhead are open.*

Ten

Unique and compatible with Southern Arizona living is a home in Tucson, a structure which is distinguished not by its basic materials — brick, wood and glass — but by its proportional use of each. What makes the house unique is its flowing design — the extensive use of flat, multi-level roofs and the sense of oneness of indoor and outdoor space.

The home, built by Mr. and Mrs. Irving Rubinstein, is truly one of glass, the entire back giving access to light. In addition, glass in alternating clear and translucent squares make up the home's front entrance. Also, split-level roof forms skylights in the living room.

Although the theme of oneness comes mostly from the use of glasswork, there is solid utilization of brick and wood. The brick is used in the interior of the house for walls and as semi-partitions. To carry the flow of this material throughout the entire scheme it is also repeated in the patio walls.

Wood, too, compliments the use of glass and brick. Combed grain fir flooring — applied directly to studs and joists — is employed both for wall and ceiling facing. This lends a "floor-like" appearance to the ceiling.

To avoid unwanted walls impairing the from-entrance-to-patio visibility, round concrete columns, cast in Sonotube forms, are used for support. Hence, excellent visibility is not confined to eye-level. Because of the split-level roof, as much as a three foot difference in elevation, a "bonus" view is given living room occupants —

ARIZONA HOMES & SOUTHWEST LIVING



*Fir flooring is used for living room ceiling. The overhead trellis continues into the adjoining rooms, contributing to the feeling of "oneness."*

## *beckons the outdoors in*

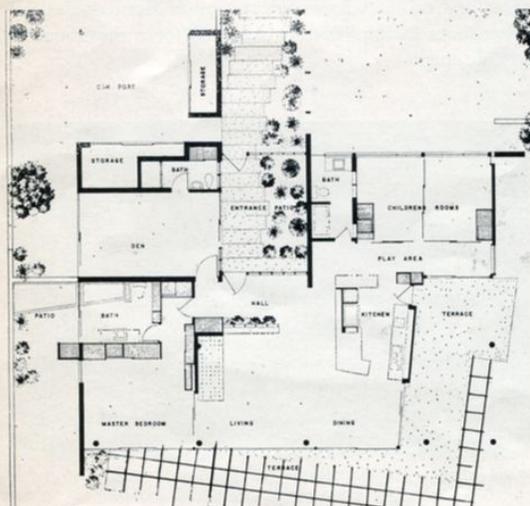
a view not only outward but upward, to mountains and sky.

Glass, brick and wood are also utilized in the bathroom, which opens onto a small private patio and pond through large sliding glass doors. Here is a rich textured wooden ceiling and a combination brick and glass tile wall which extends down to the half-sunken tub.

Neither did architect William Wilde neglect the

**Builder, Irving Rubinstein**

**Architect, William Wilde**



February, 1961



*Built-in sewing cabinet and pass-through shelves divide kitchen from dining room. Concrete column replaces supporting wall, giving spaciousness to rooms.*

Eleven