



MESQUITE STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

The oldest neighborhood in Las Cruces, the Mesquite Street Historic District has numerous adobe houses dating from the 1800s. Listed on the State and National Historic Registers, the District is still home to some of the descendants of the original settlers.

The architecture of the neighborhood reflects the unique culture of the area with Traditional Adobe, Mission, Spanish Revival and Territorial styles.

A Brief History of the Original Townsite

Inhabited by the Mogollon and Anasazi (Ancestral Puebloan People) long before written history, this valley saw Spanish conquistadors, missionaries, adventurers, Spanish and Mexican settlers come and go for centuries before Las Cruces was established.

In 1848, the Mexican War with the United States ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Land that once was part of Mexico became part of the United States territory. The First Dragoon of Company H of the U.S. Army arrived to protect the communities from Apache raids. The small village of Doña Ana, settled by Mexican colonists, had survived Indian attacks and starvation and began to grow at a rapid pace. The mayor of the village, Don Pablo Melendres, asked Lt. Sackett to survey a townsite further south, to relieve overcrowding in Doña Ana.

In the spring of 1849, using a rawhide rope, the town of Las Cruces was platted in 84 city blocks; blocks of land were designated for a business district, a church and a camp santo (cemetery) and the eastern portion was designated for family homes. Under a large cottonwood the heads of families drew lots from a hat to determine what land they would own in the Original Townsite.

Mesquite Street, the main street in the District, was recently designated by the National Trails System as part of **El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro** (Royal Road of the Interior Lands). In use for over 300 years, it is the earliest Euro-American trade route in the United States connecting Mexico City, Spain's colonial capital, to the Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo north of Santa Fe. www.caminorealcarta.org



BOMBACH HOUSE (VALENCIA APARTMENTS)

119 S. Campo St.

Built: 1880's.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Commercial.

Architectural Style: Spanish-Pueblo & Mission Revival.

Material/Structural System: Traditional Adobe.

Other Name(s): Valencia Apartments, Las Cruces Abstract & Title Company (current).

Original Owner(s): Otto Bombach.

Other Owner(s): Manuel Chavez, Guy and Robert Floyd.

This well-preserved Spanish-Pueblo structure was built in the late 1880's for Prussian merchant Otto Bombach.

Later, the property was purchased by his son-in-law Manuel Chavez, county office holder and court interpreter, and the one who transformed the single-family building into apartments. Mrs. Lela Carwardine, famous for being one of the first female pilots who flew in powder puff derbies, lived for a while in one of these apartments, as well as other professional women and students. The building was remodeled in 2003 by Guy and Robert Floyd to serve as the office of Las Cruces Abstract & Title Company.

As most of the typical adobe constructions, this single -story, beautiful structure features the characteristic thick adobe walls and rounded edges, a flat roof hidden behind a stepped parapet, and multiple arched entrances and windows. A large, arched entryway with heavy wooden double doors and iron hardware marks the facade facing Campo Street. An addition was made to the right-side entrance (facing the parking lot), which is now the main access of the building.

When looking at the characteristic adobe thick walls in this single-story 19th century dwelling, it is important to be aware of the benefits of this kind of construction. The thickness -also good for protection purposes in the old pueblo structures- is an amazing isolation feature that keeps the house cool during hot days, and warm on cold

days as it takes a long time for the extreme temperatures to penetrate, this makes adobe an eco-friendly construction ideal for many different weather conditions and with advantages that are really hard to beat. As in many other adobe buildings, the main doors are slightly raised above the ground level to avoid flooding due to the infrequent, but heavy American southwest rain and Monsoon storms. In addition, it protects the walls as adobe structures are vulnerable to moisture.

Even though the building has been remodeled, it still retains most of the original architecture including its beautiful main facade with stepped parapet. It is possible to see the word "Valencia" from the 1927 remodeling process to transform the single-family dwelling into apartments for rent (Valencia Apartments). As an ornamental feature, two bas-relief amphoras (urns) lightly colored with an earthy red tone, light wall fixtures on each side of the front door, and an arched niche in the upper part of the parapet complete the facade facing Campo street. The niche is a common adobe architectural element, historically used to display religious or art objects.

Beverly Chavez-Floyd, previous owner of the Bombach house -today Las Cruces Abstract and Title Co.- is also the proprietress of the "Patina Home" store located on Main Street, she is a descendant of the original owners of the house.

INTERESTING FACT: DID YOU KNOW THE USAGE OF PARAPETS IN THE PUEBLO ARCHITECTURE WAS DUE TO PROTECTION PURPOSES? THE EXTENDED WALL OVER THE ROOF CREATED A SHELTER DURING ATTACKS.



NEVAREZ HOUSE

Location: 100 S. San Pedro St.

Built: 1913.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Commercial.

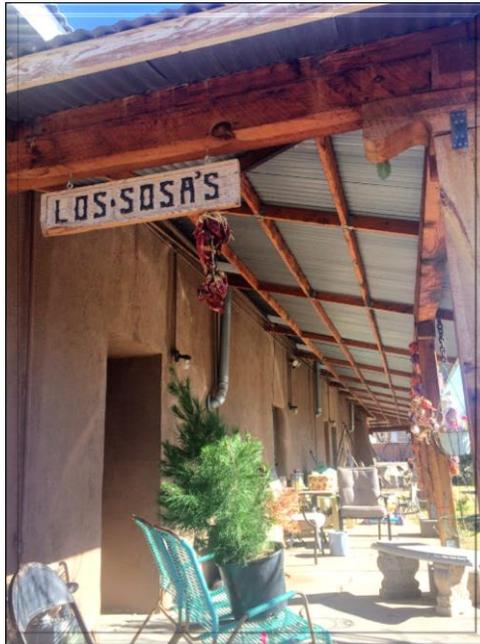
Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Other name(s): Valentine and Martinez Law Offices.

Original owner(s): Jesus F. Nevarez and his wife, Mary Kelsey Nevarez.

Jesus Nevarez studied law, serving in the state legislature and as Doña Ana County Clerk and Deputy County Clerk for 22 years (he alternated the position of county clerk with his brother, Miguel). He married Maria Kelsey, the daughter of an Irishman called Louis Kelsey and his Mescalero Apache wife. About 1913, Jesus F. Nevarez and his wife had this house built. In the 1920's and 30's eloping couples from Texas were usual visitors, to get help from Mr. Nevarez to get marriage licenses in Las Cruces.

The one-story stuccoed adobe house features hipped corrugated metal roof (currently covered by shingles) and overhanging eaves, 6/6 paired double-hung windows with white arched window trims, and, as most of adobe homes, a high foundation. Instead of the typical *canales*, this house roof drainage system consists on a gutter and a downspout (probably a late addition).



JOSE MARIA SOTO HOUSE

Location: 326 N. San Pedro St.

Built: 1860.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: New Mexico Vernacular.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Jose Maria Soto and Francisca Delgado.

Other owner(s): Bernardino Herrera, Dan Sosa Jr.

Originally from the Basque region of Spain, José María Soto immigrated to Mexico where he met his wife, Francisca Delgado. They moved to New Mexico and settled around 1886, raising a large family of 10 children in this house. Mr. Soto was a very respected and esteemed person in the community, that is why he was appointed Justice of the Peace of Dona Ana County in 1894 even though he spoke very little English. On the other hand, his wife never learned English, but she was a talented weaver and business woman, so she used these abilities as an exchange for food and other necessities. She also made sure her children understood and were encouraged about the value of education, especially the girls who later were sought out for their bilingualism and well-respected family upbringing to hold significant positions in the growing community. Three of them, Zenaida, Leonor, and Leva became some of the first telephone operators in the city. Several generations of descendants were born and raised in the house including Daniel Sosa, Jr., who served as a pilot during World War II in Europe and went back home to study law. He founded the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund and served 16 years on the New Mexico Supreme Court.

The adobe house with hipped corrugated metal roof, features six-light windows with iron grillwork, and a fullwidth side porch supported by square wooden posts and unadorned wooden corbels. The thick, deep adobe walls match with the sculpted adobe fence (recent addition) with wooden door and rough cut branches that serve as grillwork for small, long openings.



JOSE CAMUNEZ HOUSE

Location: 306 S. San Pedro St.

Built: 1920.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: Hip box.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Jose Camunez.

Built about 1920, this house was the residence of Jose Camunez (1889-1959), a town trustee who worked in the service sector for more than 30 years, as City Marshall for 8 years and as fire chief until his retirement in 1956.

The residence features a hip roof with asphalt shingles and large double hung windows with white trimming. A side gabled wooden porch roof with simple concave-cut wooden brackets protects the main door and serves as a support for a traditional *ristra*. The *ristra* is an arrangement of drying chili pepper pods that are commonly found on home portals in New Mexico, and are said to bring good health and good luck. More often, they are hung up to dry for later cooking and eating or used only as decoration. The bright red screen door contrasts with the light blue colored stucco walls (originally white), and white door casings and window trimmings unify the design. Rounded by a large yard, the house is enclosed by a rough low fence with pyramidal topped towers in the corners.



JESUS HEREDIA MEDINA HOUSE

Location: 305 S. San Pedro St.

Built: 1907.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Off market.

Architectural Style: New Mexico Vernacular.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Jesus Heredia Medina.

Mr. Jesus Medina was a well-known local artist and sign painter born in the 1860's in Chihuahua, Mexico. He immigrated very young to the United States and later, in 1907, designed and built this house himself. In contrast to some of the other adobe buildings in the area, the Medina House has very large arches and a recessed porch, both typical characteristics of Mexican architecture. Medina was also a veteran of the Spanish-American war.

The large and robust adobe building wooden side entrance door is also recessed, painted in white and one-step raised above the ground floor, as it was common in adobe structures. Other features include a white trimmed two-panel window with an oversized muntin bar and sills completely shaped out of adobe. An arched main entrance and two oversized round arch openings provide this beautiful structure with a sculpture-like appearance.

The recessed porch is 3-step raised above the street level and currently shows a cement floor, two doors and a window. Behind a 4-light white trimmed window frame is possible to see a second, and recessed 9-light window with green trimming. Two entrances are located inside the empty porch, a five-panel wooden door with a two-panel wooden screen and transom window, and a second wooden door with diamond shaped window and a four-panel screen door. An old tin horizontal mailbox with magazine holder is attached to one of the doors. A late addition was made to the house roof which was originally flat, this is clearly noticeable as a wooden gable end with vent was attached to the thick adobe walls to support the new low-pitched roof.



ROYBAL APARTMENTS

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Location: 408-418 S. San Pedro St.

Built: Late 1880's.

Historic use: Residential/Apartments.

Current use: Off-market.

Architectural Style: New Mexico Vernacular.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Roybal family.

A well-known family in Las Cruces, the Roybal family has a long lineage of Piro/Manso/Tiwa caciques since the eighteenth century. Felipe Roybal (1858, El Paso, Texas) was the Tigua tribal cacique at the end of the 19th century. His son, Vicente Roybal, born in 1897, succeeded him from 1935 to 1978. Later, Vicente's son Felipe, born in 1920, continued the lineage as cacique, succeeded by Edward Richard Roybal in 1991, who is the tribe's current cacique. Felipe Roybal was found dead in 1906, and his funeral has been said to be one of the most beautiful and touching funerals seen in this place, accompanied by a massive crowd. Traditionally, the tribal cacique has nothing to do with administrative matters but is, instead, the main spiritual figure of the tribe, and a healer. Vicente Roybal (Felipe Roybal's son), used herbal medicine and practiced chiropractic while he was cacique.

The Roybal Apartments is a New Mexico vernacular adobe structure with metal hipped roof that was built by the Roybal family in the final quarter of the 19th century. Something to look at when visiting this home is the stepped buttress on the back-right side of the building and, of course, the proportions, as it is a remarkably long building. History notes often mention the clever comment of the writer C. L. Sonnichsen who said that "*Las Cruces had buildings that would be skyscrapers except that they lay on their side*", the Roybal Apartments are definitely a clear example of it. The length of the structure is at least six times its height and has 7 doors and windows in both front and rear facades that, sadly, are currently boarded up. The property is currently off-market, abandoned, and its walls are burned due to a fire a couple of years ago.



SILVERIO GONZALEZ HOUSE

Location: 417 S. San Pedro St.

Built: 1889.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: New Mexico Vernacular.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Silverio Gonzalez.

Other owner(s): Melendrez Family.

Mr. Silverio Gonzalez bought a *jaca* house from Hilario Morales in 1887, and two years later, he built this structure as a second and larger house in the same lot. The house is now occupied by Melendrez family, descendants of one of Dona Ana Bend Colony Land Grant original settlers.

This interesting New Mexico vernacular building, features several traditional elements of this popular architectural style in Las Cruces. Earth-toned, thick weathered adobe walls, recessed doors and windows and a flat roof, coexist with bright purple metal *canales* with scalloped edges, and a unique 10-light purple colored door with clear glass sidelights. The house address number is made of green tiles over a light mosaic background and a typical city symbol: the sunburst (*Zia*) surrounding three overlaid, blocky crosses representing grave-markers on the centuries-old trade route to Santa Fe that marked where the city sprang up. A commercial purple tin mailbox with magazine holder is attached to the main facade. A wooden three-panel green gate is set on an uneven, undulating back wall located parallel to the main façade and behind the parking space. The purple and green elements contrast to the earth-toned adobe walls.



ALVAREZ HOUSE

ALVAREZ HOUSE

Location: 428 S. San Pedro St.

Built: 19th century.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: Territorial.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Borja Alvarez, Diego Alvarez.

The hipped roof structure covered with corrugated metal belonged to the families of Borja and Diego Alvarez, and presents very well preserved pedimented territorial double-hung windows with wooden lintels, and a recessed four-panel pedimented door with transom window and fan light. The contrasting colors on doors, windows, pediments and brackets, highlight the architectural features of the house and, unlike Pueblo and Spanish revival styles, this territorial dwelling does not have the original adobe earthy tone but is painted in vibrant pink and red colors. A grill on the right side of the building and a rough-cut wooden gate behind a log pergola with corner and double ended carved corbels (on the left side, and probably late additions) close the access to the backyard. The wooden door hood covered with clay shingles, has exposed beams and lintel and it is supported by large, uncarved white wood brackets. Two built-in mini square towers at ground level flank the 2-step access to the house.

The adobe dwelling is surrounded by a beautifully sculpted adobe fence with traditional small rectangular openings, wooden stick-made grilling, and log lintels. This late addition was made under a pueblo architecture inspiration, featuring soft, rounded corners, instead of the straight lines and sharp corners of the territorial style of the house.



URITIAGO/VAN PATTEN HOUSE

Location: 639 S. San Pedro St.

Built: Unknown. Before 1911.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: Eclectic. Mission Revival and Territorial influences.

Material/Structural System: Stuccoed adobe.

Original owner(s): Juana Uritiago and Ignacio Gujalva.

Other owner(s): Eugene Van Patten, Gabriel Van Patten.

Other name(s): Joyce T. Macrorie Studio Gallery.

Eugene Van Patten (1839-1926), moved to El Paso, Texas in 1859 where he was a stage coach driver for the Butterfield Overland Mail Route. Among many other accomplishments, he was a Confederate officer during the Civil War, taking part in battles at Val Verde and Apache Canyon (Glorieta Pass), Sheriff of Doña Ana County, county judge, justice of the peace, interpreter of territorial court, chief deputy U.S. Marshal for Western Texas, Captain in NM Territorial Militia during the Apache and rustler wars, co-founder of the New Mexico State University and also an advisor of Teddy Roosevelt concerning the formation of the Rough Riders of Spanish-American War. He was friend and protector of the Tigua and Piro Pueblo Indians, and after moving to Las Cruces in 1872, he became the owner of the Van Patten Resort in the Organ Mountains.

A well esteemed and respected citizen in Las Cruces, Eugene Van Patten was promoted to Brigadier General upon retirement, and had a huge funerary service. Businesses and schools closed so his friends might attend his funeral and thousands of people followed the procession to take him to his burial. Eugene Van Patten purchased this house in 1911 from Juana Uritiago and Ignacio Gujalva.

It is impossible to visit the neighborhood without noticing the beautiful Mission Style parapet with brick coping of the Van Pattern house. This blue and coral-colored stuccoed adobe dwelling features a row of undecorated metal *canales* to direct the flow of collected rainwater from the flat roof and out of the building. The *canales* project through the parapet which is not only ornamental as it serves as a windbreak. Several 2/1 double hung windows with blue-colored lintels, sills, and trimmings; a square four-light window next to the main door, and a rough-cut log portal framing the entrance of the building complete the design of this dwelling. A mural depicting the *Virgen de Guadalupe* -doubtless the most venerated religious image in the Mexican culture- decorates the facade facing Soledad avenue. There's a high possibility this mural is a late or recent addition but it is unquestionably a clear demonstration of the religious culture of Las Cruces.

INTERESTING FACT: IN ONE OCCASION, BILLY THE KID SURRENDERED HIS RIFLE TO EUGENE VAN PATTEN. THE RIFLE WAS LOST WHEN A GRANDAUGHTER TRADED IT FOR A TANK OF GAS IN THE 1930'S, BUT IT WAS LATER RECOVERED AND TODAY IT IS SAFE IN A MUSEUM IN CALIFORNIA.



WILLIAMS HOUSE

Location: 722 N. Mesquite St.

Built: Unknown.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: Bungalow.

Built by: Ignacio Ogaz.

Original owner(s): Williams Family (Jospel B. Williams and Clara B. Williams).

The Bungalow as an architectural style was a reaction to the mass-produced and overly ornate architecture of the Victorian Era, being influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. It features simple, clean lines, sparse decoration, as well as natural materials that vary depending on geographic location. Stucco walls and clay-tile roofs, were very common in the West. Not only the design makes this building special but the people who originally lived in it. Clara Belle Williams was the first African American teacher in Las Cruces and the first African American to be graduated from New Mexico State University. A street on campus (Williams Avenue) was named after her and her three sons who also attended NMSU and became physicians. In 2005, the NMSU English building was named Clara Belle Williams Hall and the Clara B. Williams Scholarship is offered in honor of her "legacy of lifelong education". Mrs. Williams also worked in the local school system.

This bungalow house, raised about 5 steps above the street level, has suffered many renovations. The front door was moved, and the original portico was walled in, the main facade window opening with posts was substituted by a larger mirrored window, and wide built-in frames were added to all windows including the upper ventilation window. The stone fence was also a late addition. Part of the short, solid frustum shaped columns from the original porch are still exposed, as well as a part of the gabled porch roof. A low-pitched gable roof, with broad eaves shields the house from the sun.



NARCISO ALVAREZ HOUSE

Location: 640-646 N. Mesquite St.

Built: About 1900.

Historic use: Residential/Commercial.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: New Mexico Vernacular.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Narciso Alvarez.

Large adobe house with thick walls and rounded edges, a flat roof hidden behind a stepped parapet, metal unornamented *canales*, and a long portal covered by a corrugated metal shed roof and supported by a green-colored wooden structure that includes thin carved square wooden posts with carved details. The recessed double-hung window sashes with green trimmings, sills and lintels are protected with iron grillwork, and painted Mexican tiles are used to display the address number. Wooden window hoods covered with metal roofing crown the windows on the facade facing Lucero Avenue. In contrast to the three-sided *canales* on the front facade, the side facade has cylindrical *canales*.

The house was owned by Narciso Alvarez, a city jailer and road supervisor.



LUNA/TRIVIZ PROPERTY

Location: 444 E. Hadley Ave.

Built: Unknown. Probably late 1800's.

Historic use: Residential/Commercial.

Architectural Style: Adobe Vernacular.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Florencio and Pilar Luna.

Other owner(s): Eliquio Triviz.

This large, adobe house was probably built in the late 1800's for Florencio and Pilar Luna. Mr. Luna was a local representative to the territorial legislature. In 1906, blacksmith Eliquio Triviz who was a widower, took possession of the house and built a blacksmith shop on the property so he could check on his children while working in the yard.

One of the main features of this well-preserved dwelling is the way the heavy wood *vigas* (beams) are embedded and extending through the wall to the exterior. The recessed double-hung windows with four light in each sash, feature adobe build-in sills and blue trimming on the facade facing Mesquite Street, while 6/6 double hung windows face Hadley Avenue. The exteriors are asymmetrical with irregularly placed windows and openings, the house is crowned by an open gable corrugated metal roof, and the main entrance door is hidden on a side façade under a metal blue door hood. The sculpted lines in this building show the honest use of the material as a design element itself, even though the natural adobe tone on walls and board and batten siding on gable have been recently covered and replaced by a solid white coating.



SIERRA/CARBONNIERE HOUSE

Location: 101 S. Mesquite St.

Built: 1870.

Historic use: Residential/Commercial.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: Territorial.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner: Francisco Sierra.

Other owners: Jean and Antonia Carbonniere.

This house was part of the Sierra-Carbonniere property. The original owners, were Francisco Sierra and his wife, Refugia Salmon de Sierra, who emigrated from Mexico around 1867, and later, gave the land to their daughter, Antonia Sierra and her husband, Jean Carbonniere, an immigrant from France. They enlarged the house in 1910, then divided the land among their children. The portion where the house is built went to their son, John and his wife, Margarita, who built the house and raised their three children there. In addition, they had two home-based businesses: a print shop and a shoe store. Per Jeannette Carbonniere Apodaca, John's niece:

"The house was one of the prettiest in the neighborhood at that time. It was built with indoor plumbing, which was not always the case. The main carpenter for the house was Richard Apodaca, though my Uncle John as well as my Uncle Ben Ames helped to build (it). They had a little shoe store in the front room that is now a bedroom. They would bring shoes up from Mexico and sell them out of that room. I remember when my aunt and uncle would go out, my cousin and I would have a ball in there trying on all the shoes." Source: Las Cruces Sun News.

The design of these one-story buildings is very simple. Straight lines, flat roofs, very thick adobe walls, a couple of old, weathered *canales* (traditional pueblo style water spouts), and bright colors. The older house features a brick coping that is currently covered by the same terra-cotta painting of the walls, and straight lines build a simple, geometric design shaped in adobe. Older pictures reveal the houses have been repainted and restored. As in most of the houses from this period, it features recessed double-hung windows (in this case with 8 lights in each sash), and white trimming. The second house (corner of Griggs and Mesquite) has beautiful wrought-iron grills and hardware on door, windows and gate. The pretty grill scrollwork design and fleur-de-lis gate finials are reminiscent of Spanish-style homes. An old, interrupted, red wooden low fence, protects the plants.



SANTA ROSA RICO HOUSE

Location: 339 E. May Ave.

Built: 1890's.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: Territorial.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Owner(s): Santa Rosa Rico.

In 1882 there was an Apache wagon-train raid in between Lordsburg and Clifton, the only survivor of this wagon train massacre was New Mexican Santa Rosa Rico, who was a freighter and for some time a deputy sheriff. This territorial style adobe house, built in the 1890's, was once his home.

Santa Rosa Rico served as a deputy sheriff, a railroad policeman, and later a special mounted police in 1913. In 1919 he became a full-time mounted police in Las Cruces.

INTERESTING FACT: IT WAS COMMON TO NAME NEWBORNS ACCORDING TO THE SAINT'S DAY ON WHICH THE BABIES WERE BORN. THAT IS WHY SANTA ROSA RICO RECEIVED A GIRL'S NAME AS HAPPENED TO MANY OTHER BOYS OF HIS TIME.



JOSE RUIZ HOUSE

Location: 429 E. May Ave.

Built: About 1906.

Historic Use/Type: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: Eclectic with Queen

Anne and Territorial features.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Original owner(s): Jose Ruiz.

Jose Ruiz was a master carpenter who had worked for important builders, architects, and designers such as Bascomb and French, Percy McGhee and Elias Day. In 1906, on a thirty-dollar lot, he built this house, that was undoubtedly one of the finest in the city. A full-width front porch with carved wooden posts and decorative woodwork is the warm welcome to this home. A corrugated metal hip roof with overhanging eaves and exposed wooden rafter tails, is joined by the porch hood. Simple saw and chisel cuts create a simple geometric pattern on the square posts supported by Queen Anne inspired wooden corbels. The unusual recessed door surrounds are probably the only ones of their kind.

The house is currently leased as an apartment building, and retains several of the original interior doors and beautiful territorial door frames.



FEDERICO C TELLES, SR. HOUSE

Location: 738 N. San Pedro St.

Built: 1893.

Historic use: Residential.

Current use: Residential.

Architectural Style: Territorial.

Material/Structural System: Adobe.

Owner(s): Federico C Telles, Sr. & Romana Presciado Telles

On June 1, 1888 at the age of 25, Federico C Telles, Sr. (1863-1951), a citizen of the United States and a life-long native of Las Cruces, took possession of a section of undeveloped land within the northern boundary of the original town site of Las Cruces, NM.

In or around the year of 1893, Federico built a small Territorial Style adobe structure on the Northwest corner of the land. Per the original deed signed by him in 1888, the land is described as being a square lot which measured 50 Varas on each side (approximately 0.437 acres.) Of interest, the 1888 deed also refers to San Pedro St., which at that time was named St. Peter St., as being located on the 3rd Public Street of the original town site and Augustine Avenue is referred to as being an alley.

As recorded starting with the 1910 U.S. Census, Federico and his wife Romana *Presciado* Telles (1883-1963) raised their family of three sons and one daughter in this home, all of whom were born in the home. Federico and Romana are both buried in the original section of the historic San Jose Cemetery. The adobe house remained in the Telles family from 1888 until 2016 at which time it was purchased and restored to preserve the original architecture. During the restoration process, the new owners discovered that the original front entryway had been sealed up in the past and moved to a different location. To preserve the original Territorial Style the restoration plans were altered and the entryway was relocated back to its original place in the center of the house. An early 1900's hand-made door that matched Federico's original door opening size was found in El Paso and the new owners installed it in the original location in order to recapture the yester-year charm of the home.

Other Points of Interest in Mesquite Historic District



Phillips Chapel CME Church

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this Chapel at 638 N. Tornillo was the center for the African-American community in the neighborhood.

Klein Park

Though not the first park built in the city, this is the site where it is believed families drew lots from a hat to determine which lot would be their families'.

Sunshine Grocery

A landmark since the 1930s, this neighborhood grocery at the corner of Hadley & Mesquite St. was a community meeting place and at one time supported its neighbors with a clothing bank, health resource center and active book lending library.



Jardin de Mesquite

The northern gateway to the Historic District at the corner of Spruce and Tornillo features eight 6' x 8' tiled murals commemorating historic events, landmarks and the multicultural settlers of the area.



Entrada del Sol

The eastern gateway at Manzanita and Hadley Ave. frames the Organ Mountains. Tile panels and trim were handmade by the community under the direction of a local artist. The lighting at Entrada del Sol is solar powered.