



# HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

THE NEVADA DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHEOLOGY  
201 South Fall Street — Nye Building — Room 113 — Carson City, Nevada 89710

## 1 IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

### A. Name Of Property

Historic Name: The Phillips Ranch

Common Name:

### B. Location Of Property

County: Washoe City: Reno

Address: 1907 South Arlington Avenue

Township, Range, And Section: T19N; R.19E

Acrage Or Size Of Lot Or Property: .5 acre

## 2 CONDITION AND STATUS

### A. General Condition Of Property

☒ Excellent ☐ Deteriorated

☐ Good ☐ Ruins

☐ Fair ☐ Unexposed

### B. Has Property Been Altered

☒ Yes ☐ No

Known Alterations: House extended to rear incorporating a stone shed and dormers were enlarged.

### C. Is The Property Threatened

☐ Yes ☒ No

If So, How Or By What:

### D. Has The Property Been Moved

☐ Yes ☒ No

If Yes, When Was It Moved:

What Was Its Location:

### E. Is The Property Occupied Or In Use

☒ Yes ☐ No

### F. Public Involvement

☒ Exterior Visible From Public Road

☐ Interior Accessible To Public

### G. Present Use

☐ Agriculture

☐ Commercial

☐ Education

☐ Entertainment

☐ Government

☐ Industrial

☐ Military

☐ Museum

☐ Park

☐ Religious

☒ Residence

☐ Scientific

☐ Transportation

☐ Other

## 3 OWNERSHIP

### A. Present Owner

Name: [REDACTED]

Address:

### B. Present Occupant

Name:

#### 4 SITE SURROUNDINGS

A. Immediate Setting: Structure situated approximately 25 feet from Plumb - and 20 feet from Arlington Avenue on a busy corner of a major intersection. Reasonably well maintained garden with lawn, mature shrubs and trees. Detached garage to the rear and the south. Handsome, low stone walls border Arlington Avenue and Plumb Lanes frontages.

B. General Setting: Extremely busy streets and intersection with large office complex to the north, vacant lot to the east with residential property to the west and south.

#### 5 FORMS COMPLETED BY

A. Name: Suzanne Loomis; Barbara Moreland B. Date April 1, 1981  
and Betty Hendrickson  
C. Organization: Junior League of Reno

#### 6 MAP

#### 7 PHOTOGRAPH

#### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Theme:

Map Reference:

UTM:

Hydrological Basin:

Staff Recommendation:

	A	AH	H	HA
INV	—	—	—	—
SR	—	—	—	—
NR	—	—	—	—

Additional Information Needed On:



**8 IDENTIFICATION**

A. Historic Name: Arlington Nursery B. County: Washoe

**9 CONSTRUCTION DETAIL**

A. Date Of Construction/Alteration(s): Ca. 1945 /

B. Architect:

C. Builder/Contractor:

D. Architectural Style:

Note: information has been provided only about the two "original" (Ca. 1945) sections of the building; please refer to map.

**10 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERIOR**

A. Structural System: Single story, frame construction, of an irregular shape.

B. Foundation/Basement: Brick and concrete foundation; no basement.

C. Exterior Walls: #1 - see map attached - rustic "V" channel wood siding  
#2 - brick front and brick on east wall, west side is wood siding.

D. Fenestration: Windows are predominantly double hung, wood frame, sash windows.  
#1: two windows (2/2) on rear south wall are original. Burglar bars were added in 1980. Bay window in front of shop in Section #1 was added, in 1980.  
#2: one 4/4 to left of door; original window. one 6/6 to right of front door; original window. Decorative shutters were added in 1980. The four metal frame casement windows on the east side of the building are typical of the 1940's.

E. Roof (type and material): Three of them are 3/4; one is 4/4, each with lintels. Asphalt shingle. original.

#1 - new sloping roof. (Almost the entire roof, was replaced during the 1980 renovation of Arlington Gardens). In #1 the original roof was only 7½ feet high; therefore, additional wall height and roof were added.

#2 - low gable with overhanging eaves.

F. Additional Architectural Features:

#1: open patio in rear. Covered open area in front used as common area for several shops.

#2: porch under roof overhang along front (North facade), with brackets on each side of simple supports (brackets were recently added). Wood fenced patio on right side of front. Stepping stones, leading to front porch came from original owner's office building in downtown Reno.

## **11** DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR

- #1: Original floor in front portion of shop; original fireplace on west wall. The west wall was originally a fence on the property - it was torn down and the pecky cedar boards were made into the west wall. The original ceiling was only 7½' tall so walls above that and the roof were added. The wall dividing the front and rear portions of the shop was added.
- #2: Original painted brick walls and original front windows. Original brick floor and walls. Decorative shutters were added in 1980. The front door, on south wall, was added.

## **12** HISTORICAL DATA FOR PROPERTY

See attached.

## **13** REFERENCES CITED

## HISTORICAL DATA

### for the Phillips Ranch and Arlington Gardens

After graduation from the Western Dental College in Kansas City, Dr. Fred Phillips from Greenleaf, Kansas, traveled west, arriving in Reno in 1906. He spent a brief period of time in San Francisco, offering his assistance in the wake of the devastating earthquake of 1906. He then settled in Reno and embarked on a successful professional career which was to last over 50 years.

Dr. Phillips married Matti Roberts from Gold Hill, whose father had been involved in the mining business during the height of the mining activity in that area. Dr. Phillips father moved to Reno from Kansas and, until his death, had the distinction of being the last surviving Civil War veteran in Nevada.

In 1915, Dr. Phillips began to acquire land at the intersection of Plumb Lane and Arlington Avenue, at the present site of Arlington Gardens shopping mall. At that time, this was ranching land, well beyond the outskirts of Reno. Subsequent purchases of property in this same vicinity were made by Dr. Phillips in 1919 and 1930.

The Phillips family house, constructed of rounded river rock gathered on the property was built ca. 1918 in a local interpretation of the "bungalow style" which was popular throughout the western United States. Barns, a milk house, , sheds, low river rock walls and fountain were built in this same period. A large and flourishing kitchen garden was maintained, reflecting Dr. Phillips' enjoyment and interest in gardening. Shade trees and conifers were planted, many remaining today as mature trees. Sometime in the 1930's, the family house was enlarged, embracing a river rock shed to the rear, but generally preserving the rustic character of original structure. Of the original buildings on the "ranch", the family house, milk house and beautiful stone walls remain unchanged today.

During World War II, Dr. Phillips philanthropically donated his professional services to the war effort, for which he was officially commended by both Presidents Roosevelt and Truman.

In 1945, Dr. Phillips daughter, Dorothy and her husband, John Benson, returned to Reno at the close of the War and opened Arlington Nursery. Mrs. Benson has remarked that her father's life long interest in horticulture made it seem like a natural decision to operate a nursery, which was auspiciously started on the site of a World War II "victory garden" on a two acre portion of the Phillips Ranch. The original Arlington Nursery building was built ca. 1945-46 with a massive brick fireplace and handsome floors of paving blocks, reminiscent of Spanish tiles, which were acquired by Dr. Phillips when, in one of his many enterprises, he bought out a Reno brick yard. Granite slabs, steps from the building at North Virginia and Second Streets, where Dr. Phillips for many years maintained his practice, were incorporated in the paths surrounding the nursery buildings.

## HISTORICAL DATA

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For many years, Arlington Nursery was Reno's most complete and prestigious garden center and landscaping business. At the height of its operation, 30 individuals and 5 trucks were employed by the Nursery which covered approximately 5 acres of land. The Nursery maintained a large stock of seasonal bedding plants, annuals and perennials, as well as the area's largest supply of shrubs and trees for permanent planting. Generally, plant material was shipped in from California, Oregon and the Mid-West. For a brief period of time, however, the Bensons, tried growing their own stock from seed in green houses and cold frames. But these experiments were abandoned as they proved costly and inefficient. The sale of cut flowers was also suspended after a fire in the late 1940's which destroyed part of the Nursery was attributed to the motor in the flower refrigeration unit. For many years, Arlington Nursery was the agent for Buckner Sprinklers and Johns Manville Farm equipment.

During the 35 years that Arlington Nursery was in business, it blossomed into a variety of boutiques and specialty shops, pioneering, in a sense, the concept of a shopping mall in Reno. This was in part a result of the need to maintain staff and trade during the "off season" winter months. Drawing inspiration from the delightful Allied Arts in Menlo Park, California, the Bensons added landscaped patios, courtyards and an Orinetal fish pond creating an attractive maze of shops.

With a true commitment to the beautification of the State, and a love of horticulture, the Bensons undertook many worthwhile and lasting landscaping projects throughout Western Nevada. Many of these were volunteer efforts with much or all of the plant and landscaping material and labor being donated by the Bensons. Particularly noteworthy are the numerous plantings and projects at the University of Nevada, Reno. A partial list is attached hereto to indicate the diversity and number of such projects taken on by Arlington Nursery.

On May 19, 1979, Mrs. Dorothy Phillips Benson was awarded the status of "Distinguished Nevadan" by the University of Nevada, Reno. The citation reads...

"Nevadans are proud of the beauty of their state and Dorothy Phillips Benson has contributed substantially to its beautification.

Visitors to the UNR campus will enjoy the magnificent Benson Memorial Gardens near the planetarium for years because of her efforts.

Not only did she donate the plants and contribute toward the maintenance of the garden, but she is often seen tending the garden herself.

She has been actively involved in UNR's Arboretum Board which works to create a living museum of trees and flowers on campus.

She was born in Reno and graduated from UNR in 1936.

She opened Arlington Nursery in 1946 and has been involved in many major landscaping and irrigation projects in Western Nevada.

Because of her special talents and generosity, she has given Nevada an outdoor artistry that generations will enjoy...."

## HISTORICAL DATA

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In 1979, Mrs. Benson donated to the Junior League of Reno, the site of Arlington Nursery and buildings to be preserved and maintained as a garden shopping mall and operated for the benefit of the many community and public interest projects which are supported by the Junior League. After modification to bring the Nursery buildings in line with City codes, Arlington Gardens opened in July, 1980 with over a dozen unique shops, a popular lunch restaurant and a setting of charm and character unequalled in Nevada. Inspired by the tradition set by Dorothy Phillips Benson, Arlington Gardens was now successfully launched as an important community center. Adjacent to and coupled with the quaint river rock ranch house on the corner of Arlington Avenue and Plumb Lane, Arlington Gardens remains a cheerful reminder of Reno in another era.