

Countess of Suffolk and the Forest Lodge

By Christian Durazo

The Town of Oro Valley was founded in 1974 but there are many historical homes that brought fame to the area many years before that. One such place was the Forest Lodge, a house in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains, in the southeastern most corner of the Town of Oro Valley. This house was made famous because of its architecture and also because of one of its owners, Margaret Howard. Margaret Howard was a wealthy American, also known as the Countess of Suffolk because of her marriage to the Earl of Suffolk.

In 1935, the Countess of Suffolk lived in England but wanted a home where she can spend winters in milder weather after the unfortunate passing of her husband. She hired a famous Tucson architect Richard A. Morse to design the Forest Lodge, it was known to be a perfect example of the Modern style at the time. Pictures of its beauty went on to be shown in multiple architecture magazines. The Forest Lodge still stands today at 410 E. Magee and frequently visited, and continues to show the one of a kind architecture thanks to the efforts of the Town of Oro Valley and its preservation program. The community around the home which is known as the Suffolk Hills subdivision and has 190 homes.

During the settler boom after WWII, more and more residents wanted to live away from the busy city and early settlers like the Countess of Suffolk were instrumental people that started shaping the landscape of communities that later went on to become the Town of Oro Valley. Promoting better awareness of its architectural and cultural history, and to foster civic and neighborhood pride so that future generations will have the opportunity to appreciate and understand Oro Valley's unique cultural heritage.

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Sources

<https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/parksandrec/historic-preservation-cultural-resources/historic-architecture>

<https://news.azpm.org/s/5741-history-moment-forest-lodge/>