



Name of Property: Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios

City, State: Taos, New Mexico

Period of Significance: 1908-1952

NHL Criteria: 1, 2

NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
2. visual and performing arts

Previous Recognition: National Register of Historic Places:

- Taos Downtown Historic District, July 8, 1982, NRIS 82003340
- Individually listed, September 28, 2005, NRIS 05001096

National Historic Context: XXIV. Painting and Sculpture
Cultural Nationalism Era, 1900-1940

1. American Regionalism
2. Regionalism in New Mexico

NHL Significance:

- The Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios meet NHL Criterion 1 as an exceptional property representing the Taos Society of Artists, a group that significantly contributed to national appreciation of the regional landscapes and American Indian cultures of northern New Mexico in twentieth-century painting in the United States.
- During its twelve-year existence and through its annual circuit exhibitions across the country, the Taos Society of Artists garnered unprecedented interest in the American Southwest and its Indigenous cultures as sources of artistic inspiration and national identity. The Society helped to establish New Mexico as a regional art center and a must-see tourist destination.
- Couse served as President of the Society for its first five years and hosted meetings at his home and studio throughout the Society's tenure, as well as member reunions after its dissolution.
- The property also meets NHL Criterion 2 as the longtime studios and home of two charter members of the Society, E. Irving Couse and J. Henry Sharp, both of whom trained in European art academies before



establishing nationally prominent artistic careers that contributed to recognition of the Southwest as home to a regional school of American art.

- Couse and Sharp trained in Paris and Munich, respectively, and their oeuvres reflect the differences between these two approaches to painting while portraying similar subjects of American Indian peoples, craftwork, and cultures. Both are considered masters of American painting in the early-twentieth century.

Integrity:

- The property retains excellent integrity to 1908-1952, the period of significance for its association with the productive work lives of artists Eanger Irving Couse and Joseph Henry Sharp.
- The Couse home and studio have been purposely maintained by his descendants and the Couse Foundation as they were at the time of Couse's death in 1936; Sharp's two studio buildings have likewise been preserved as they were in 1952, when the artist left the property for the last time, with minor rehabilitation work undertaken to adapt them to compatible new uses.
- The surrounding historic landscape is well-preserved and remains very close to what it was when Couse and Sharp occupied the site, with no new buildings introduced, Virginia Couse's extensive gardens carefully maintained, and historic landscape features such as walks, garden walls, and small-scale features retained.
- All historic buildings have excellent integrity of design, materials, and workmanship with no to very little alterations made past the period of significance. The site retains an exceptionally high level of feeling and association. The studios illustrate each artist's approach, technique, and customization of tools and materials developed for the purpose of creating art, and because they were modified specifically for each artist, the studios also demonstrate the artists' use of space and sense of design.

Owner of Property: Couse Foundation

Acreage of Property: 2.23

Origins of Nomination: The NPS Heritage Partnerships Program, working in cooperation with the property owner, sought to prepare an NHL nomination in recognition of the national significance of the artistic careers of Eanger Irving Couse and Joseph Henry Sharp.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: This nomination will provide detailed documentation of the artistic careers of both Eanger Irving Couse and Joseph Henry Sharp and recognize the national significance of the property to the American regional art movement.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of May 27, 2025):

- Dwight T. Pitcaithley, PhD, Former Chief Historian, National Park Service
- Michelle M. Ensey, Division Director and State Historic Preservation Officer, Department of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division, State of New Mexico
- Debra Garcia y Griego, Cabinet Secretary, Department of Cultural Affairs, State of New Mexico
- Charles Whitson, Executive Director, Taos Mainstreet
- Dustin Leavitt, Family Member and Couse-Sharp Historic Site Board of Directors, Tucson, AZ



- Elizabeth Crittenden Palacios, Chair, Board of Directors, The Couse Foundation, Taos, NM
- Gustavo Victor Goler, Artist, Taos, NM
- Sean Michael Chavez, Artist, Santa Fe, NM
- Brent Jaramillo, County Manager, Taos County Administration
- Valerie A. Balint, Director, Historic Artists' Homes & Studios, Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Patricia Michaels, Taos Pueblo, Taos, NM
- Mayor Pascualito Maestas, Town of Taos, NM
- Governor Edwin Concha, Taos Pueblo
- Ilona Spruce, Director of Tourism, Taos Pueblo

Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Confirm consistency of spelling Ben Lujan throughout.
- As with engagement of Taos Pueblo, pursue outreach to the Crow Nation to seek input regarding Sharp's artistic work in Montana.
- Suggest amending description of parapet (p. 77) to Spanish Colonial-inspired parapet.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Eanger Irving Couse House and Studio and Joseph Henry Sharp Studios in Taos, New Mexico, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: