draft
CONSERVATION PLAN

TUCSON COMMUNITY CENTER LANDSCAPE

designed by
GARRETT ECKBO

. . . landscape design is the continuous establishment of relations between man and the land, tying in those hills and valleys and broad panoramas which are beyond design, through designed elements which establish a scale relation between each individual human and the larger landscape, placing them so that the individual gets a maximum experience from the relationship.

Garrett Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*

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for Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation

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ALL LARGE FORMAT BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE TUCSON COMMUNITY CENTER 1972-73
Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1)
Environmental Design Archives
University of California, Berkeley

INTRODUCTION

The Tucson Community Center Landscape was designed by Garrett Eckbo, one of the twentieth century's foremost American landscape architects. Created at the height of his career, it was completed in two stages in 1971 and 1973, under the direction of local architects and planners. This landscape is the only Eckbo-designed civic space in Arizona.

Eckbo was known for his interest in designing "people places" and for introducing arid-land and native plants into his designs. He understood the importance of water to those who dwell in the desert, and he recognized the unique identity of Tucson as a city of rich cultural and ecological heritage.

The Eckbo landscape has held up well for four decades, although time has taken a toll on some mechanical systems and original trees. The narrowly considered introduction of art works and large scale signage has created a sense of intrusion, clutter and disorientation. Despite this, the Tucson Community Center Landscape retains a high degree of integrity, both artistically and technically.

At approximately 5.75 acres, the Tucson Community Center Landscape represents one of the largest areas of open space in downtown Tucson. Complementing El Presidio Park and Jácome Plaza it provides an open core for large festivals and events. Its position, surrounded by cultural venues - the Arena, the Leo Rich Theater and the Music Hall - and the nearby historic Rialto Theatre, begs for a creative program of related recreational opportunities.

During the 1980s the optimism that accompanied the development of a community center for Tucson began to fade, and little by little the Tucson Community Center became known only as the Tucson Convention Center, obscuring its intended role as a cultural center for the citizens of Tucson. It will be referred to as the Tucson Community Center in this document.

The time has arrived to develop a plan for the conservation and maintenance of this remarkable community asset. This document seeks to provide a basis for comprehensive treatment of the Tucson Community Center Landscape. It would be a cultural calamity, and a totally needless loss, if through ignorance and neglect a living Tucson heritage deteriorated beyond restoration.

RIGHT
Fountain Plaza
fotovitamina 2012

OPPOSITE
Tucson Community Center Aerial
1974 Tucson Survey
Courtesy of Cooper Aerial Surveys Co.

CONTEXT MAP

The Tucson Community Center Eckbo-designed landscape forms the open core of the downtown area south of Broadway. Accessible by foot, bike, bus and automobile (with more than sufficient parking), and adjacent to the new streetcar line, it has enormous potential as a central cultural destination contributing to the revitalization of downtown Tucson.

The Tucson Community Center Landscape is owned by the City of Tucson, but the adjacent space-defining properties are owned by a variety of public and private entities. The Walkway runs between the Arizona Hotel Property (owned by the Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project) and La Placita Village (owned by Pueblo Center Partners Ltd. Partnership). The historic Sosa-Carrillo-Fremont house, and the property immediately west of it, are owned by the State of Arizona. The Arena was sold to the Rio Nuevo Multipurpose Facilities District in 1989, but the City of Tucson holds a lease on it and retains responsibility for the surrounding landscape.

LOCATION OF THE TUCSON COMMUNITY CENTER LANDSCAPE

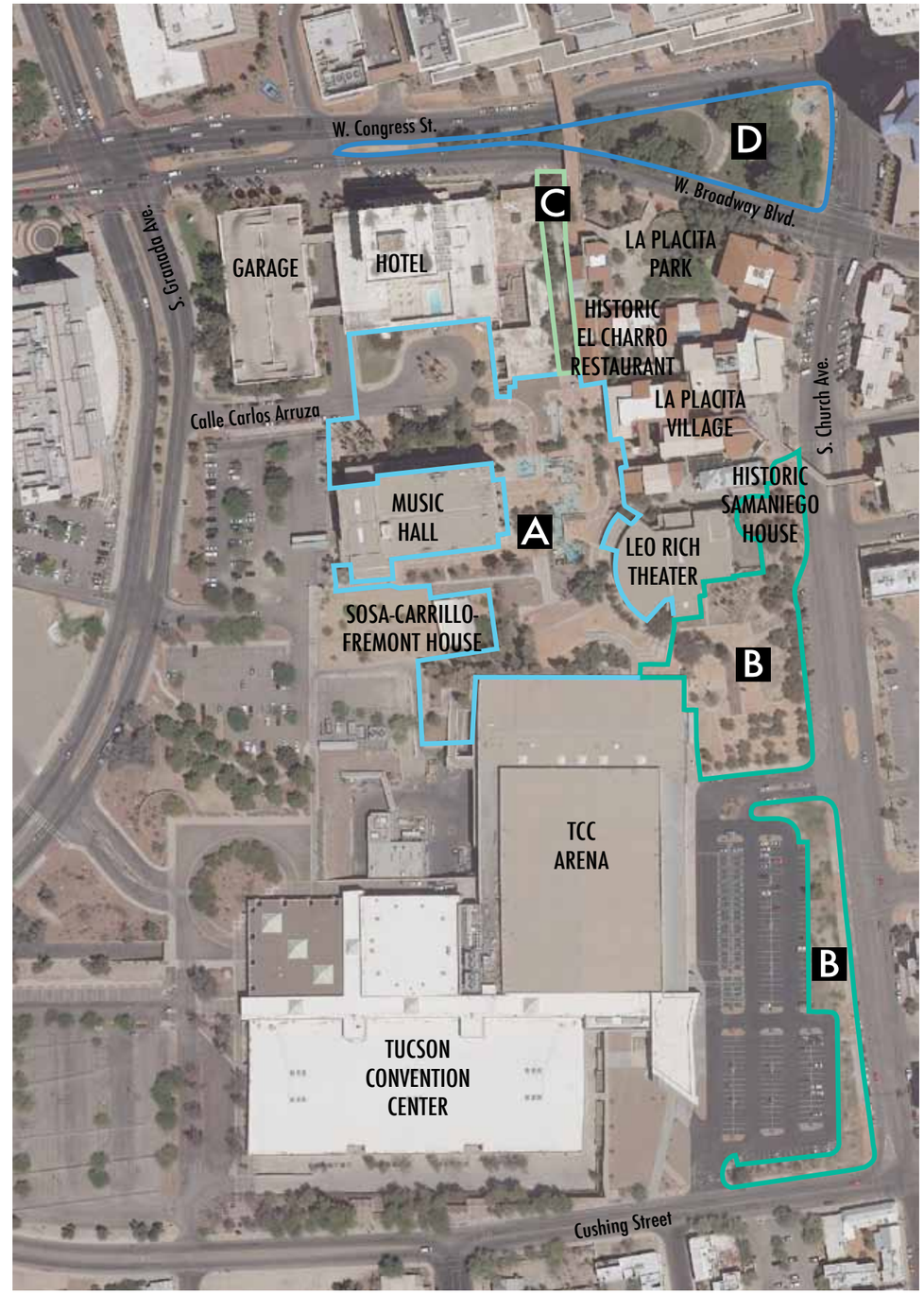
LEGEND

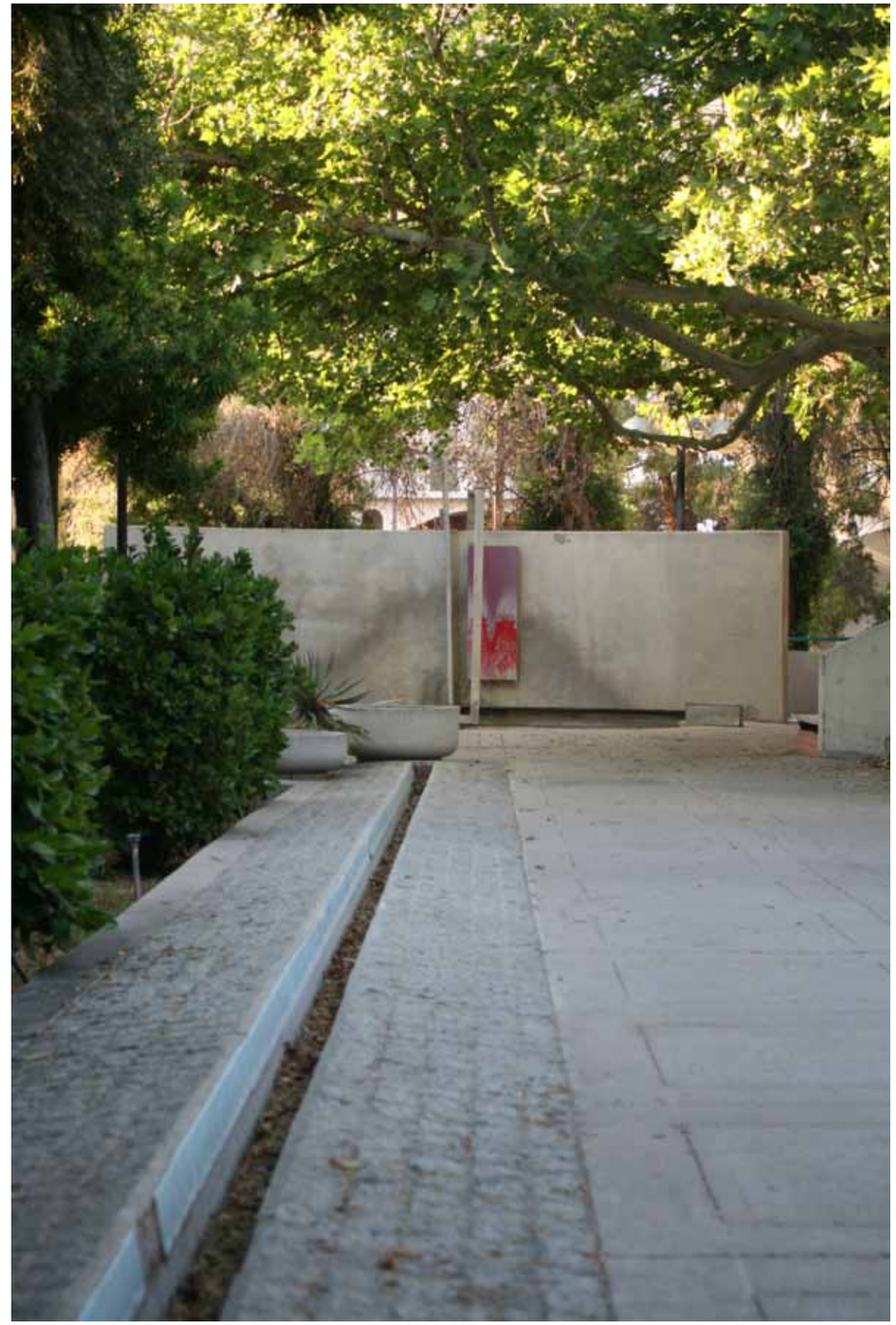
A FOUNTAIN PLAZA

B UPPER PLAZA

C WALKWAY

D VIENTE DE AGOSTO PARK





LEFT TOP
Olive Grove, Fountain Plaza
THPF 2012

LEFT BOTTOM
Canary Pines, Fountain Plaza
THPF 2012

RIGHT
Water Channel, Walkway
THPF 2012

HISTORIC CONTEXT

GARRETT ECKBO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
Tucson Convention Center Landscape 1971 – 1973

The development of the Tucson Community Center complex was the direct result of urban renewal efforts dating back to a joint venture between the City of Tucson and Pima County during World War II. It was not until over twenty years later, in 1966, that a plan for the Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project gained local financial support through a bond issue. In the late 1960s, the Tucson Planning Department developed an area of approximately fifty acres next to the city center and downtown business district. Two local architectural firms, Cain, Nelson & Wares and Friedman & Jobusch, undertook as a joint venture the design of an Arena/Exhibition Space, a Theater, and a Music Hall. At that time, space was set aside for the future development of an area of shops and offices (La Placita Village), a hotel (Hotel Marriott), and adjacent parking.

The City of Tucson Planning Department under the direction of Donald Laidlaw sought a nationally-prominent landscape architect to complete the team, reviewing the work of a number of prominent landscape architects including Eckbo and Lawrence Halprin. Influenced by the success of Eckbo's plan for the Fulton Mall in Fresno, California, Laidlaw traveled to San Francisco in 1969 to ask Eckbo to undertake the commission (Laidlaw 2012). Subsequently, Eckbo was retained to design all of the open spaces of the Tucson Community Center, providing context within the central area and connection of the facilities to the downtown area. The project was completed in two sections: the Fountain Plaza and Veinte de Agosto Park were completed in 1971; the Walkway was completed in 1973.

California Projects
by Garrett Eckbo

LEFT TOP
Union Bank Square
Los Angeles, CA

LEFT
Three views of Fulton Mall
Fresno, CA

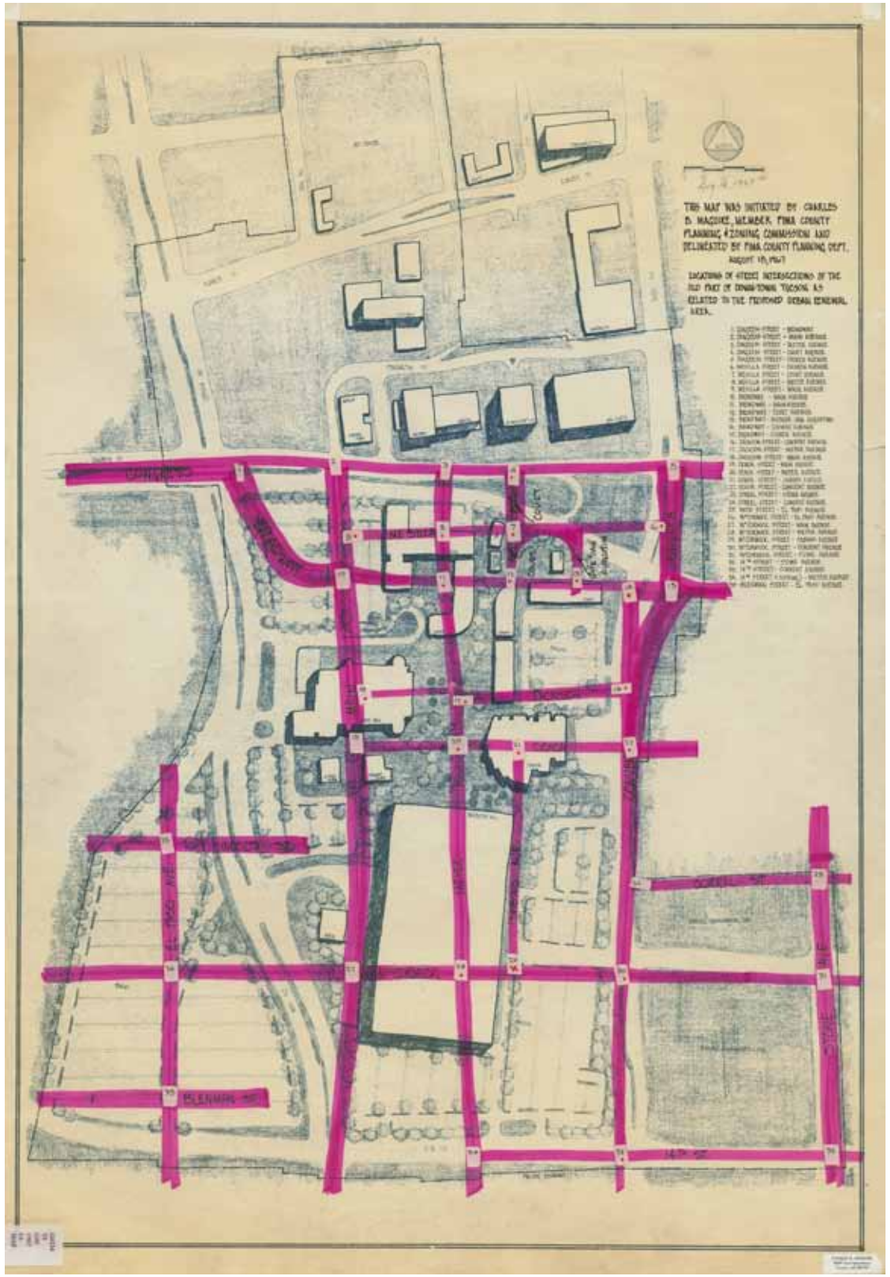
Garrett Eckbo, Los Angeles, 1959
Photograph by Julius Shulman
Julius Schulman Photography Archive
Research Library at the Getty Research Institute

Garrett Eckbo was born in Cooperstown, New York, in 1920, but grew up in Alameda, California, where his mother moved after his parents divorced. His childhood was far from privileged. He studied landscape design and floriculture at the University of California at Berkeley, receiving his degree in 1935. A year later he received a scholarship to the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. At that time, Walter Gropius was transforming the architecture program, and Eckbo, along with two fellow students, Dan Kiley and James Rose, created a self-proclaimed "Harvard Revolution," initiating the principles of Modern Landscape design. After graduating, Eckbo spent several years working for the Farm Security Administration, designing facilities for farm workers, including a number in Arizona. This experience was to have a considerable impact on his designs linked with the urban renewal programs of the 1960s. In 1942, he joined his brother-in-law Edward Williams in a partnership as Eckbo & Williams, a firm that would later expand to include Francis Dean and Don Austin and become world-renowned as EDAW (1964). In 1948, he began a teaching career at the University of California, Berkeley, serving as Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture from 1965-69, and becoming Professor Emeritus in 1978. His projects include pedestrian malls, civic centers, waterfronts, public parks, churches, playgrounds, freeway systems, botanic gardens, cemeteries, office buildings, resorts, corporate campuses and private homes, mostly in the western United States, but also in Hawaii, Brazil and Kuwait. A prolific writer, his books include *Landscape for Living* (1950), which is considered to be the single most influential treatise on Modern landscape design. He continued to work until the year before his death in 2000.

Eckbo led the rebellion against the formal and decorative Beaux Arts tradition that dominated landscape practice at the beginning of the twentieth century. Instead of following the accepted practice of adapting historic models to contemporary needs, Modernism chose as its point of departure the site, the client, the program, the materials, the architecture, the technology, and geographic character. Forms and arrangements were to be drawn from characteristics of site, climate, materials and cultural needs. People should be recognized not only as cultural individuals and groups, but as members of local, national and world societies. Design should be imaginative, yet socially and environmentally responsible. The role of tradition should be to provide inspiration and a benchmark for achievement.

The work of visual artists of the same period, especially Vassily Kandinsky and Joan Miró, had a significant effect on the formal aspects of Modern design, helping to mitigate the regularity of the axial Beaux Arts plans. Modern landscape architecture also stressed three-dimensional form, working with space from the inside out rather than from the outside in. Indoor and outdoor spaces were seen as continuous rather than discontinuous.

In addition to the general principles of Modernism that sprang from the "Harvard Revolution", Eckbo believed that experiential factors – sight, sound, smell, touch, overall feeling, psychological reaction – are as important as economic, technical, and functional factors. He further believed that continuous and substantial contact with nature was essential to a healthy design. He stressed that every designed landscape should respond to the needs of people who were to use the space, taking into account the surrounding neighborhood, the region and beyond. He felt a strong affinity for the developing ecological sensitivity of the twentieth century, and his name is frequently linked with that of ecologist Ian McHarg, who wrote *Design with Nature* in 1967.



It is difficult to overestimate Eckbo's role as spokesman for Modern landscape design theory. Sixty years later, his seminal book *Landscape for Living* (1950) is still in print. His thirty years of teaching at the University of California, Berkeley, had an enormous influence on the second generation of Modern landscape architects, and his more than 1000 built projects offer physical models of his vision.

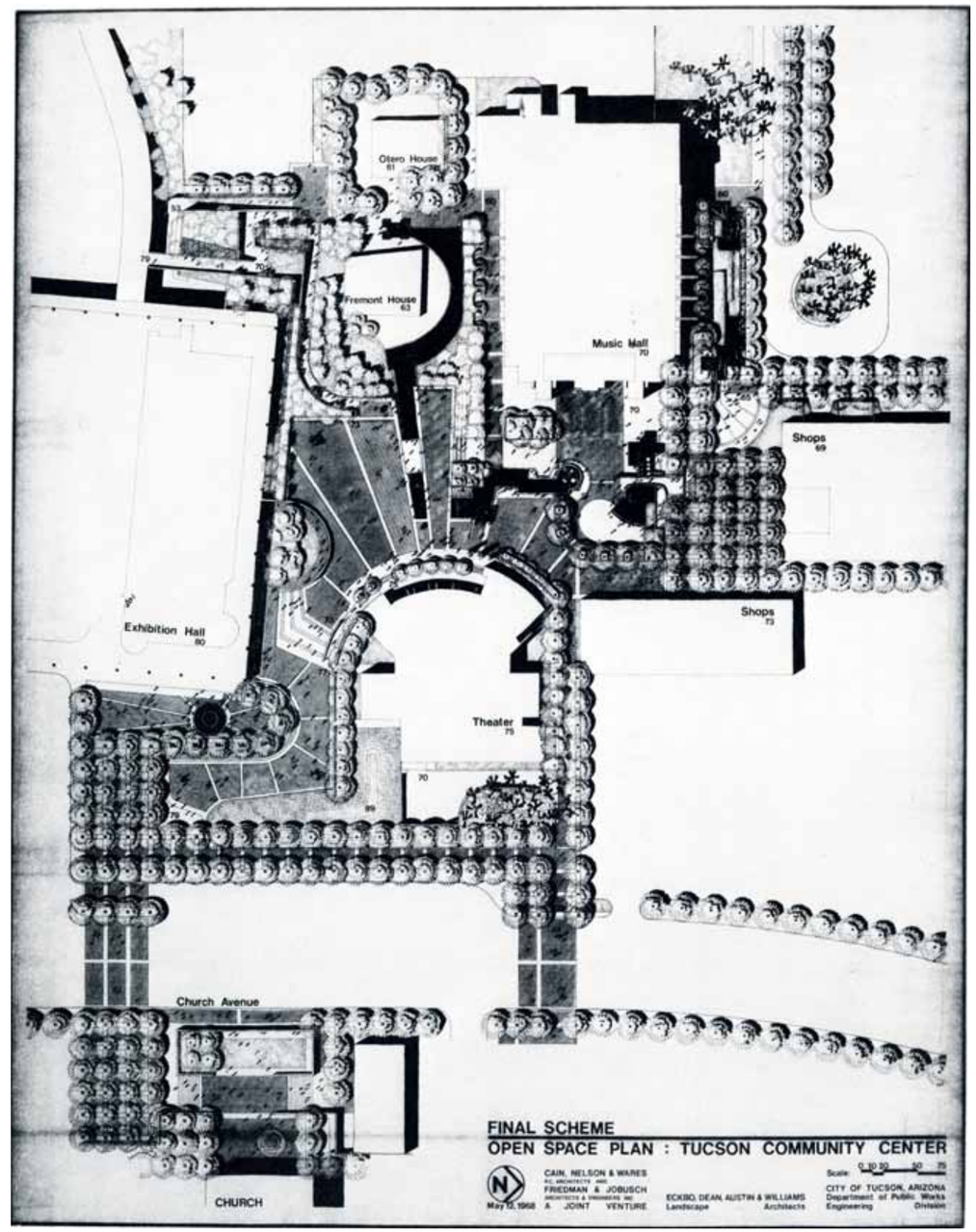
The American Society of Landscape Architects recognized the importance of the Tucson Community Center Landscape with an Honor Award in 1978. The jury commented on the exciting use of materials, the number and variety of vistas and the lovely and interesting use of fountains. That the Landscape was also personally important to Eckbo is indicated by its inclusion in the portfolio of projects in his last published book, *People in a Landscape* (1998). Thus the Tucson Community Center is not only a recognized classic of Modern landscape architecture but also a personal statement of Eckbo's design ideals.

For Eckbo, Modern landscape design was intended to transcend axial symmetry and a two-dimensional plan view through balanced equilibrium within three-dimensional space. The Tucson Community Center Landscape reveals his mastery of the concept. For example, the deceptively simple allée in the Upper Plaza initially appears to be symmetrically framed by berms and trees. On closer examination, however, the balanced equilibrium between the trees to the west, planted on the berm, and the trees to the east, planted at ground level between squares of paving, becomes clear. Another example, realized differently in the Fountain Plaza and in Veinte de Agosto Park, is the use of apparently randomly-placed natural boulders juxtaposed with rectangular concrete walls (in the Fountain Plaza) or with smoothly rounded earthen berms (in Veinte de Agosto Park). The balance between man-made or organic materials and the roughness of the natural boulders creates a dynamic balance between formal and informal elements. The use of levels within the Tucson Community Center Landscape permits an exploration of three-dimensional space in a uniquely modern way. Instead of moving down and into the Fountain Plaza from the Church Avenue side, the expanding width of the stairway creates an illusion of moving out into a spacious center. Approaching the Plaza from the Walkway, the narrowing fountain channel and spreading final fountain hints at downward movement through a narrow pass, although the space is actually flat and consistent in width.

Eckbo, along with many other Modern landscape architects, felt that design materials should reflect their innate character and integrity. Bricks should be used as modular elements; concrete should be plastic; earth should form mounds; water should flow; plants should have the opportunity to grow and change. In the Tucson Community Center Landscape, bricks are laid in square paving patterns, complemented by squares of concrete paving. Battered concrete walls intersect curved concrete stairs. Rectilinear concrete basins provide containers for moving water, which flows over concrete dams and washes around the natural boulders strewn in its path.

LEFT
Urban Renewal tore inner cities apart in the 1960s, destroying cultural heritage even as it posited a bright new future for downtown ares. Ironically, this wave of destruction helped to launch the historic preservation movement, which gained ground following the enactment of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The plan to the right, drawn in 1967, shows the existing grid of historic barrio streets overlaid on the proposed plan for the Tucson Community Center.

Existing Tucson street grid overlaid on the proposed Tucson Community Center (1967)
Charles A. Maguire, Pima County Planning and Zone Commission
Arizona Historical Society (Tucson)



LEFT TOP
Fountain Plaza
J. Gomez-Novy 2003

LEFT MIDDLE
Upper Plaza
J. Gomez-Novy 2003

LEFT BOTTOM
Construction Model showing Veinte de Agosto Park
Arizona Historical Society, Tucson
AHS 103402

RIGHT
Tucson Community Center Open Space Plan
Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1)
Environmental Design Archives
University of California, Berkeley

Eckbo also demonstrated a commitment to the use of plants ecologically suited to the climate of a site. In the case of the Tucson Community Center Landscape, he worked closely with Gene Reid and the nursery of the Department of Parks and Recreation in Tucson to select appropriate plants. The magnificent, now mature trees in the Landscape – the Arizona sycamores, the Canary Island and Aleppo pines, the African sumacs and the silver dollar eucalyptus – were chosen and sited by Eckbo.

Above all, Eckbo believed that a landscape was to serve as the link between people and their environment. In 1959, he spoke at the annual meeting of the American Institute of Planners:

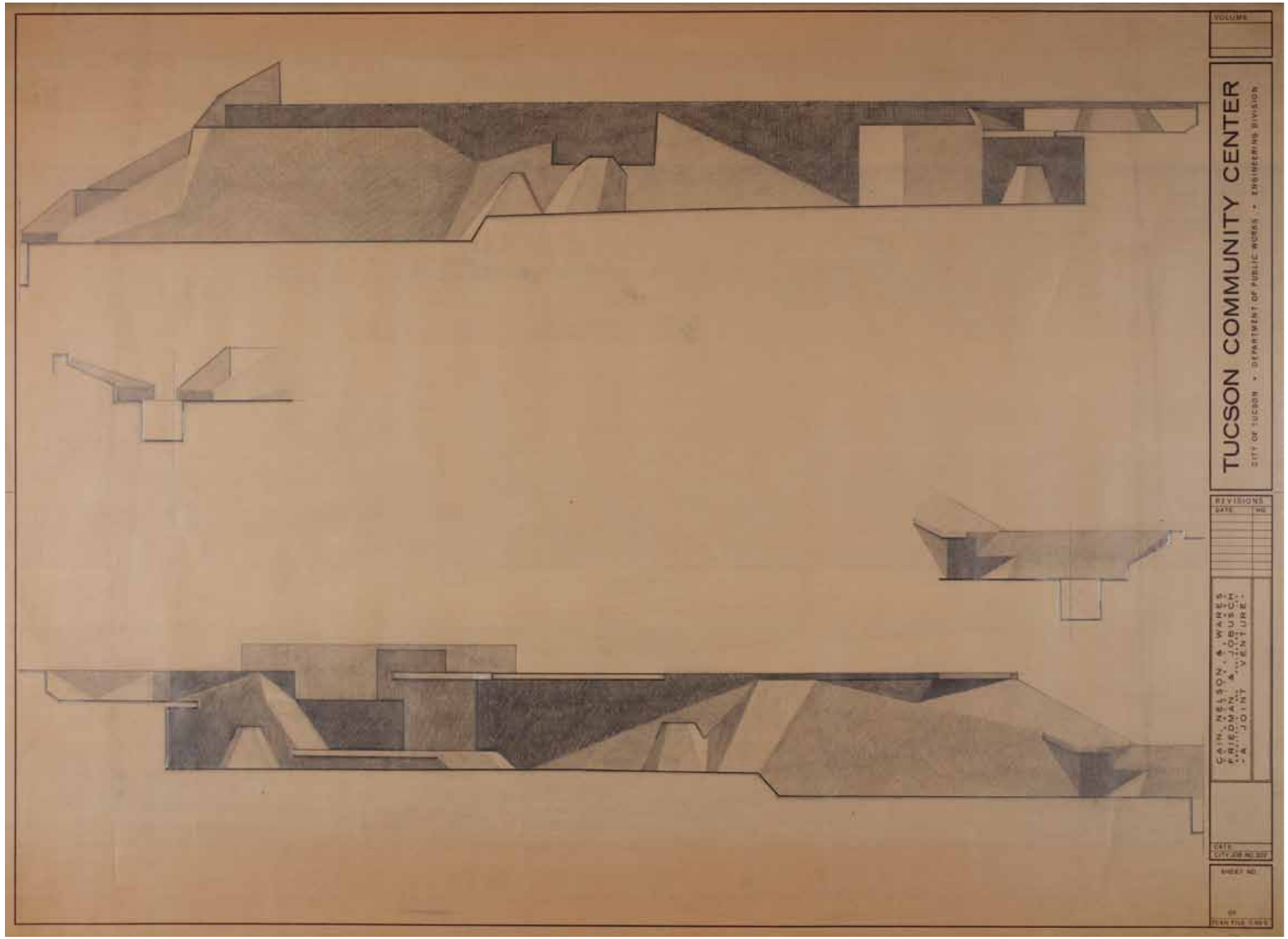
The landscape is a continuous experience for each and every human being. It is continuous in space as far as they can see and travel, and it is continuous in time from birth to death. The individual experience of each moment is conditional by the experience of all previous moments, and by the entire psychological filter of attitudes, interpretations, information, background, and education through which each individual passes his or her perceptions of the world around them.

The landscape experience is a complete composite of everything that can be seen or sensed from every station point of a circulation route. It is a composite of all the multiple disconnected decisions that have been made on all the various pieces of property which make up the scene at hand. It is likewise a composite of planning, architectural, engineering, landscape and other types of design thinking which are normally separated from one another by practice and professional boundaries.

The landscape is composed of buildings and trees, streets and ground forms, rocks and water, green open space and paved open space, cars and people, signs and street furniture, and everything else normally seen through the human eye rather than the architectural camera. It may be as small as the intimate enclosed patio, or as large as a vast panorama from hilltop or airplane. It may be experienced from a stationary position, or while in motion at any speed from walking to flying. The basic control for landscape design at every scale must be the relationship between that landscape and each individual pair of human eyes, with their small cone of direct perception within a large hemisphere of general consciousness.

One of the unique features of the Tucson Community Center Landscape is this understanding of the continuum of space. Unlike other works of Modern landscape architects, which are slipped onto a site but could just as well be situated elsewhere without detracting from the intended composition, this Landscape is sited where it belongs within the spatial continuum of the perceived universe. Not only does the design do expected things, such as respond to human needs for shade, for light, for seating, for a stable walking surface; it orients visitors to the mountains that constitute the underlying wayfinding mechanism of the City of Tucson. At another level, it provides a tactile connection between government offices, businesses, cultural amenities and the individual. It defines the place that is Tucson and links each individual to it.

This Landscape is not one-dimensional. Every passage through the site permits the establishment of a new relationship between the visitor and the landscape. At a fast walk, the major surrounding buildings or streets complement the views beyond the site. At a meandering stroll, the space expands and contracts, offering opportunities for the other senses to perceive the landscape – the sounds of water or wind in the trees, the alternation of sun and shade on the skin, the scent of pines, the coolness of water, the coolness of turf. Eckbo intended this landscape to speak to the whole person and, by doing so, to the different needs of individuals at different times,as they engage in varied activities. It is not necessary for the individual to conform to an agenda set by the design; rather the design permits individual response to landscape.



OPPOSITE TOP
Fountain Plaza
fotovitamina 2012

OPPOSITE BOTTOM
Fountain Plaza
fotovitamina 2012

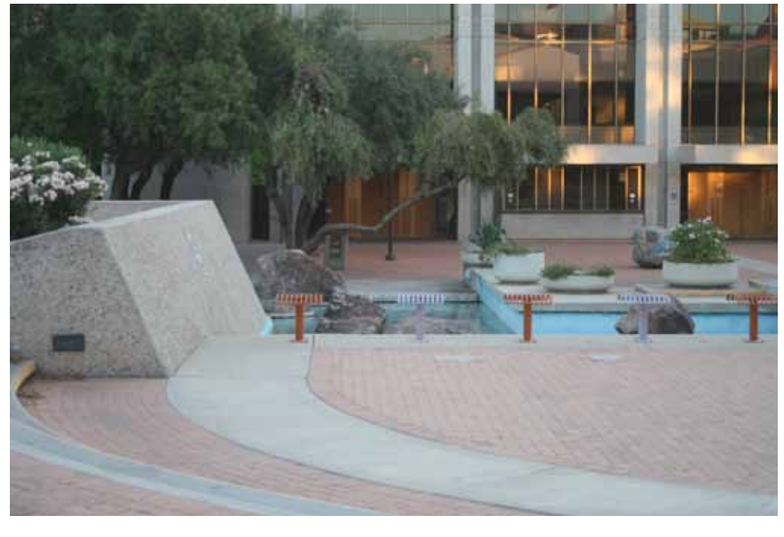
RIGHT
Conceptual Massing
Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1)
Environmental Design Archives
University of California, Berkeley

LEFT
View to Cathedral, Upper Plaza
THPF 2012

MIDDLE LEFT
View to "A" Mountain, Fountain Plaza
THPF 2012

MIDDLE RIGHT
Walkway
THPF 2012

RIGHT
Walkway
THPF 2012



LEFT
Allée, Upper Plaza
THPF 2012

MIDDLE
View to Music Hall, Fountain Plaza
THPF 2012

RIGHT
Entrance Stairway, Fountain Plaza
THPF 2012

FOUNTAIN PLAZA

MUSIC HALL

TOP
Overview of the Fountain Plaza
THPF 2012

BOTTOM
Natural boulders juxtaposed with concrete walls
THPF 2012

OPPOSITE
Plan for the Fountain Plaza showing the dry wash
Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-91)
Environmental Design Archives
University of California, Berkeley

FOUNTAIN PLAZA

The Fountain Plaza consists of all of Parcel 117-20-0270 and part of the northwestern quarter of Parcel 117 -20-029A (Tucson Convention Center Block D; Map & Plat 42/1 0). The estimated area of the landscape, excluding the footprint of the surrounding buildings (the Marriott Hotel, the Music Hall, the Arena and the Leo Rich Theater) is approximately equal to 2.51 acres, as calculated from the City of Tucson GIS website. The Fountain Plaza, along with the Upper Plaza and Veinte de Agosto Park, was completed before the Walkway.

The Fountain Plaza links the Arena, the Leo Rich Theater and the Music Hall. The feeling of this area of the Landscape is spaciousness: an open formal center with less formal nooks along the sides. Stairs and ramps create multiple levels within the space. Curved concrete walls are juxtaposed with angled steps, while curved steps are juxtaposed with angled walls. Natural boulders, spilling across both land and water, contrast with architectural brick and concrete. Cylindrical planters are scattered across the site, although plans and early photographs show them in groups.

There are three main entrances to the Lower Plaza: from the Upper Plaza to the east; from the Walkway to the north; and from Granada Avenue to the west. There is, in addition, a secondary entrance pathway running along the south side of the Music Hall from a parking area to the west of the Plaza. All entrances are ADA accessible. From the north, the Walkway directs the visitor to a pathway following an extended fountain with an elaborate sequence of water cascading over desert boulders and concrete slabs. Offset to left and right are groves of African sumac trees set into grid patterns of brick and concrete. From Granada Avenue to the west, a circular drop-off area planted with palms offers vehicular access to a grand flight of angled stairs paralleled by a curved ramp to accommodate people with disabilities – a feature designed many years before the development of ADA standards. Despite the subsequent construction of the Federal Court facility to the west, the descending return view includes Sentinel Peak. The entrance from the Upper Plaza to the north flows down a series of shallow, angular stairs into a wide, flat area designed for group activities, performances and picnics. Overlooking this part of the Lower Plaza are two tree-shaded viewpoints. One is a semi-circular grove of olive trees entered from the exterior corridor of the Arena. The other is a semi-circular corridor and reception area for the Theater, lined with bottle trees. The ADA ramp installed along the edge of the olive-grove balcony was tastefully done and does not have a negative impact on the Landscape.

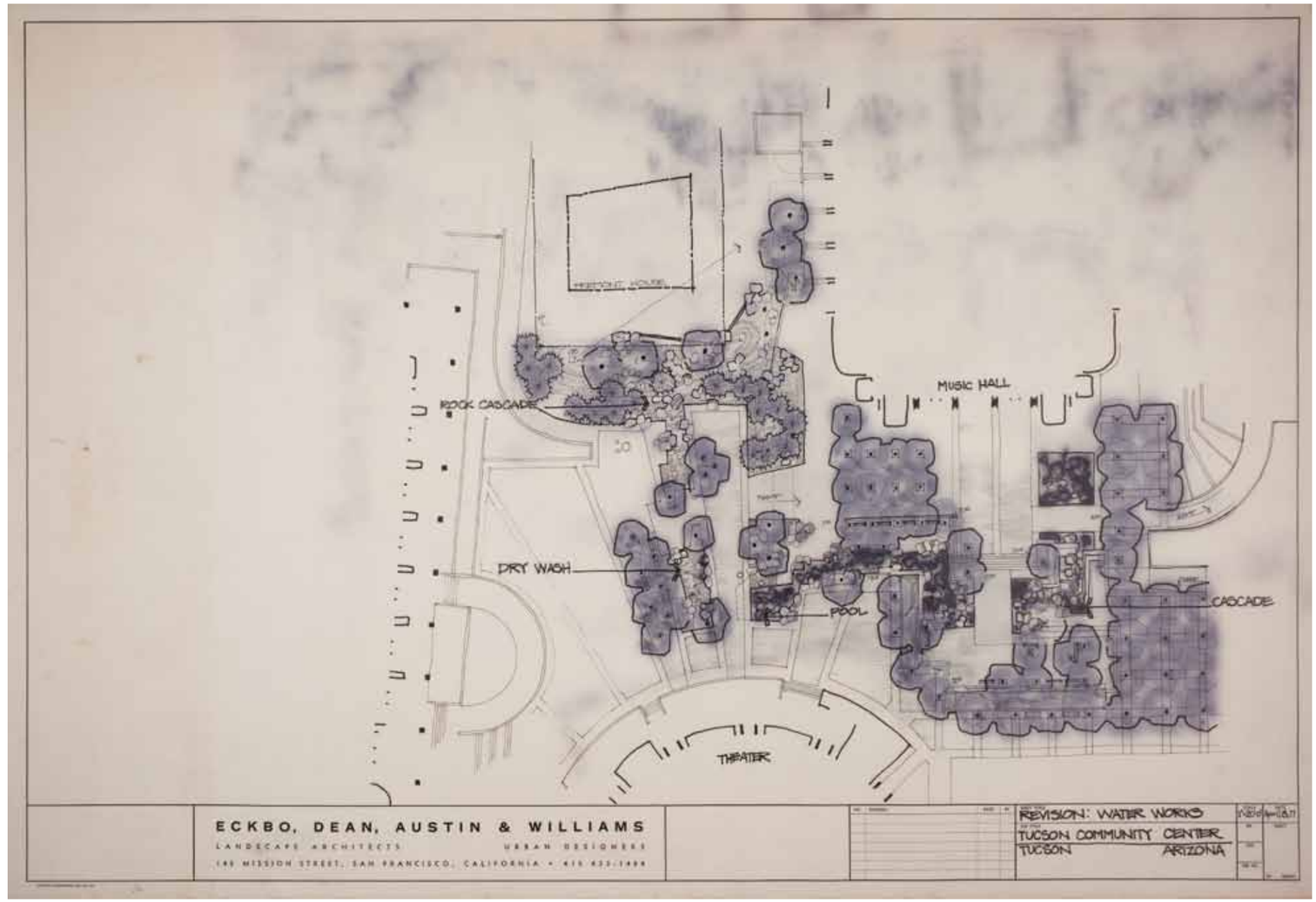
Dominating the Fountain Plaza is a series of cascading water features that spill, race and gently flow as they move through the space. Natural boulders contrast with rectilinear concrete slabs as the stream travels through areas of sunlight and shade. The fountains were designed as an attraction for people of all ages to touch, listen to and to enjoy. The Plaza still serves this function, and it is rare to find this area empty of visitors.

This plaza is the connecting tissue between La Placita Village and the Marriott Hotel to the north, the Music Hall to the west, the Leo Rich Theater to the east, and the Arena to the south. It was designed to serve multiple functions: to provide an elegant outdoor lobby for the surrounding Arena, Music Hall and Leo Rich Theater; to offer space for outdoor performances and other events; to encourage strolling, sitting and lunching; and to offer an immediate experiential link between people and the surrounding natural environment. It also stands as the symbolic center of cultural Tucson.

The Fountain Plaza retains its intended design form, massing, and rhythm. The lack of a maintenance plan, however, has led to makeshift repairs, inappropriate removal of minor features including water fountains and planters, and inappropriate replacement of vegetation. Many older trees, including specimens of olives, Canary pines and African sumac are in excellent condition and provide both shade and structure. Paving, stairways and structural walls are in good condition.

A number of condition issues affect the Fountain Plaza:

- Original underground mechanical systems for the fountains have been duplicated by parallel above-ground systems of the sort common to swimming pools, which are unattractive and noisy.
- Dead trees have not been replaced in kind, impacting the intended uniformity of group plantings; some planters have been left empty. Shrubs are overgrown.
- Several sections of turf have been replaced with decomposed granite and river rock. Desert vegetation has been inappropriately introduced to these areas.
- Some of the openings in the pavement, originally designed to accommodate trees, have been filled in with concrete or brick.
- Container plantings are inconsistent with the design intent.
- A number of the original planters are cracked or chipped.
- Tree roots have damaged areas of paving.
- The water channels have been painted with a blue swimming pool coating, contrary to the originally intended use of the natural color of concrete.
- Lime and iron deposits have formed on pool edges and rocks.
- Some added ADA paving fails to complement the original concrete and brick in composition or color.
- Yellow paint, originally not employed, now highlights the edges of steps.
- Some lighting is inoperative, and some lighting elements are missing.
- Inappropriate metal seating has been introduced, and original designed seating has been removed.
- Original kiosks, water fountains and metal location maps have been removed.
- Art works have been sited throughout the space without consideration of the design as a whole.



UPPER PLAZA

UPPER PLAZA

The Upper Plaza consists of part of the southeast corner of Parcel 117-20-0270 (Tucson Convention Center Block B; Map & Plat 42/l 0) and part of the northeast and eastern quarter of Parcel 117 -20-029A (Tucson Convention Center Block D; Map & Plat 42/1 0). The estimated area of the landscape, excluding the footprint of the adjacentbuildings (the Arena and the Leo Rich Theater) is approximately equal to 1.92 acres, as calculated from the City of Tucson GIS website. The Upper Plaza, along with the Fountain Plaza and Veinte de Agosto Park, was completed before the Walkway.

A grid of African sumac trees provides a shady forecourt and defines the location of the Arena entrance and ticket booth off Church Avenue. This grid is a characteristic motif of both the Upper Plaza and the Fountain Plaza. To the northwest of the entrance is an open space intended to surround a shallow, bubbler fountain (now replaced with a large piece of sculpture). With a curved seat wall, the area provides a quiet respite, insulated from the sounds of traffic by a long north-south berm along Church Avenue. Rays of concrete set in brick paving shine out from the center to balance a similar pattern of rays extending from the Theater in the Fountain Plaza. Just past a semicircle of mature eucalyptus trees, the rays are interrupted by the wide, angular stairway leading into the Fountain Plaza. The Upper Plaza initiates the dramatic sequence of views that dominate the Tucson Community Center Landscape. To the west, framed with tall pines, the dark and angular Tucson Mountains jut up against the sky. To the east, the Cathedral of Saint Augustine – Tucson's patron saint – gleams white over a grassy berm. Boulders tumble down the slope, as they do in the Fountain Plaza and in Veinte de Agosto Park.

An intermittent earthen berm runs along the west side of Church Avenue, providing a threshold and transition space between the Tucson Community Center Landscape and the wide (four-lane) street. To the north of the forecourt, an apparently traditional allée is cuddled between two berms, one of which separates it from the street. But in characteristic Eckbo fashion, trees planted at pavement level on one side of the walkway are balanced on the opposite side by trees planted on top of the berm – an example of Modern landscape theory in material form. Characteristic brick and concrete paving links this design to other areas of both Upper and Fountain Plazas. This paving also links the allée to a crosswalk leading to a parking area located to the east of Church Avenue. To the south of the forecourt, an undulating berm, reminiscent of a Chinese dragon wall, runs between the sidewalk and a parking area immediately to the east of the Arena. Sharing the character of the rest of the Upper Plaza, the berm enhances the Church Avenue streetscape while providing an appropriate setting for the eastern façade of the Arena.

The Upper Plaza serves a number of interrelated functions. The gridded grove of African sumac trees that marks the entrance to the Arena ticket booth also provides a shady walkway and outdoor lobby area. The open space at the northeast corner of the Arena, which originally featured a shallow bubbler fountain as its central feature, provides peaceful seating with a view of the Tucson Mountains. It also serves as the transition space into the Fountain Courtyard to the west. The linear landscapes to the west of Church Avenue serve as thresholds separating the wide street from the Arena. The allée in the northern section offers a shaded walkway from nearby parking to the Arena. The berm that forms the inner side of the allée also serves to conceal the street and associated on-street parking from the interior of the Upper Plaza, providing a stunning and uncluttered view of St. Augustine Cathedral. The southern berm serves a similar function in reverse, helping to conceal the utilitarian nature of the parking adjacent to the Arena while providing an appropriate setting for viewing the east façade from the street.

The Upper Plaza retains its intended design form, massing, and rhythm. The absence of a maintenance plan, however, has led to some makeshift repairs and replacement of hardscape. It also has permitted vegetation to be removed, or to grow up unchecked and obscure important views.

A number of condition issues affect the Upper Plaza:

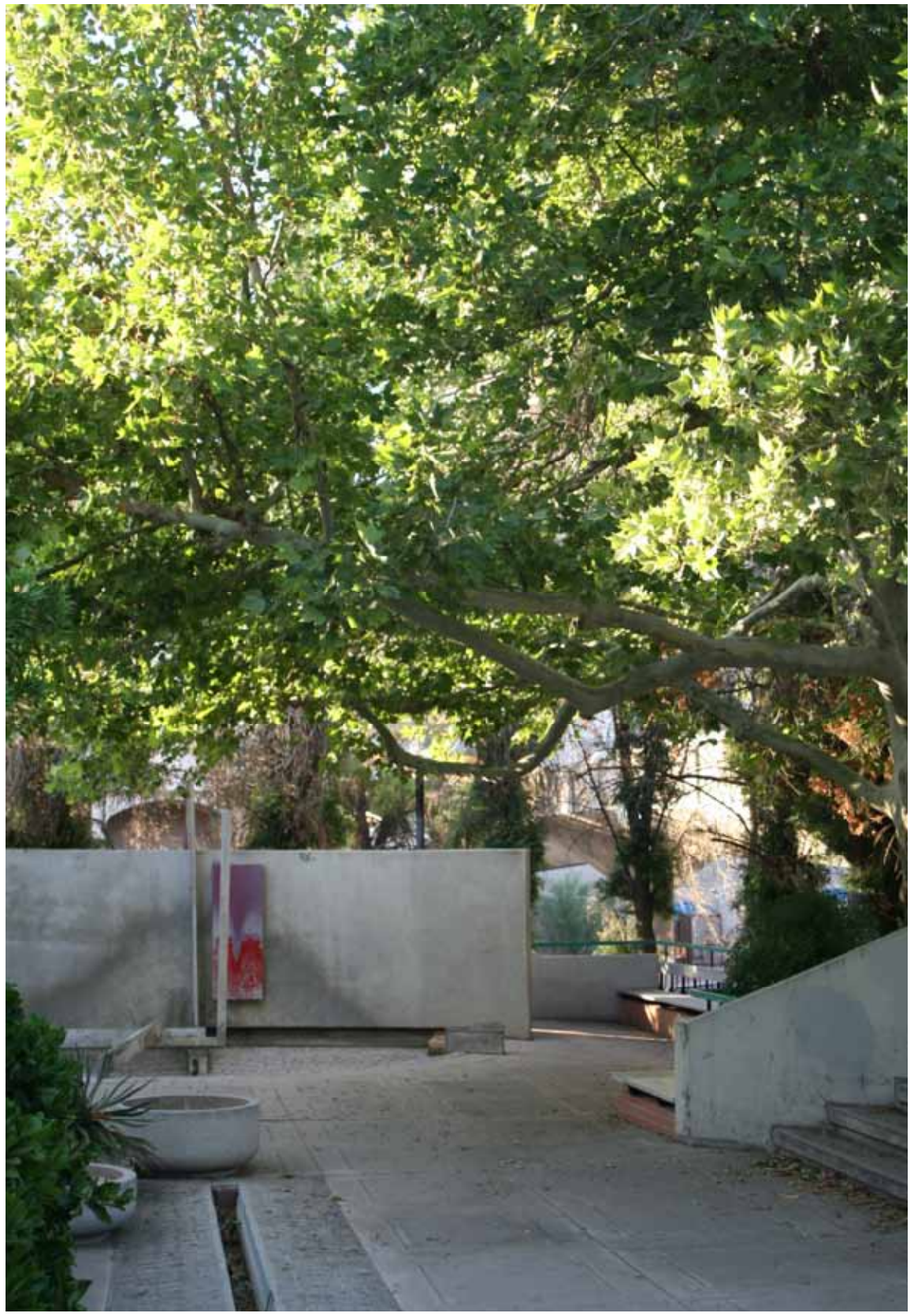
- The original fountain has been replaced with a large sculpture that blocks the view of the Tucson Mountains and negatively impacts the original open spatial concept.
- A cut has been made through the berm along Church Avenue to accommodate maintenance vehicles and pedestrian traffic. In the process, carefully positioned natural boulders have been relocated.
- Some dead trees have not been replaced. No trees remain from the original installation on the berms south of the entrance area.
- Planters are empty.
- Inappropriate metal seating has been introduced.
- Tree roots have damaged areas of paving.
- Some lighting is inoperative, and some lighting elements are missing.
- The contiguous section of the streetscape running west along Cushing Street has been redesigned and its integrity lost.

OPPOSITE LEFT
View into the Upper Plaza
THPF 2012

OPPOSITE RIGHT
The stairway leading to the Upper Plaza
THPF 2012

RIGHT
Section elevation of Fountain Plaza, looking west
Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1)
Environmental Design Archives
University of California, Berkeley

WALKWAY



WALKWAY

The Walkway, which links the Plaza to the plaza area of La Placita Village and to a pedestrian bridge across Broadway Boulevard, and Congress Avenue to City of Tucson and Pima County government buildings to the north, is a separate, irregular parcel. Parcel 117-20-016C is located on the west side of lot 5, block 510. Its area is approximately equal to .19 acres. The Walkway was completed in 1973, later than other sections of the Landscape.

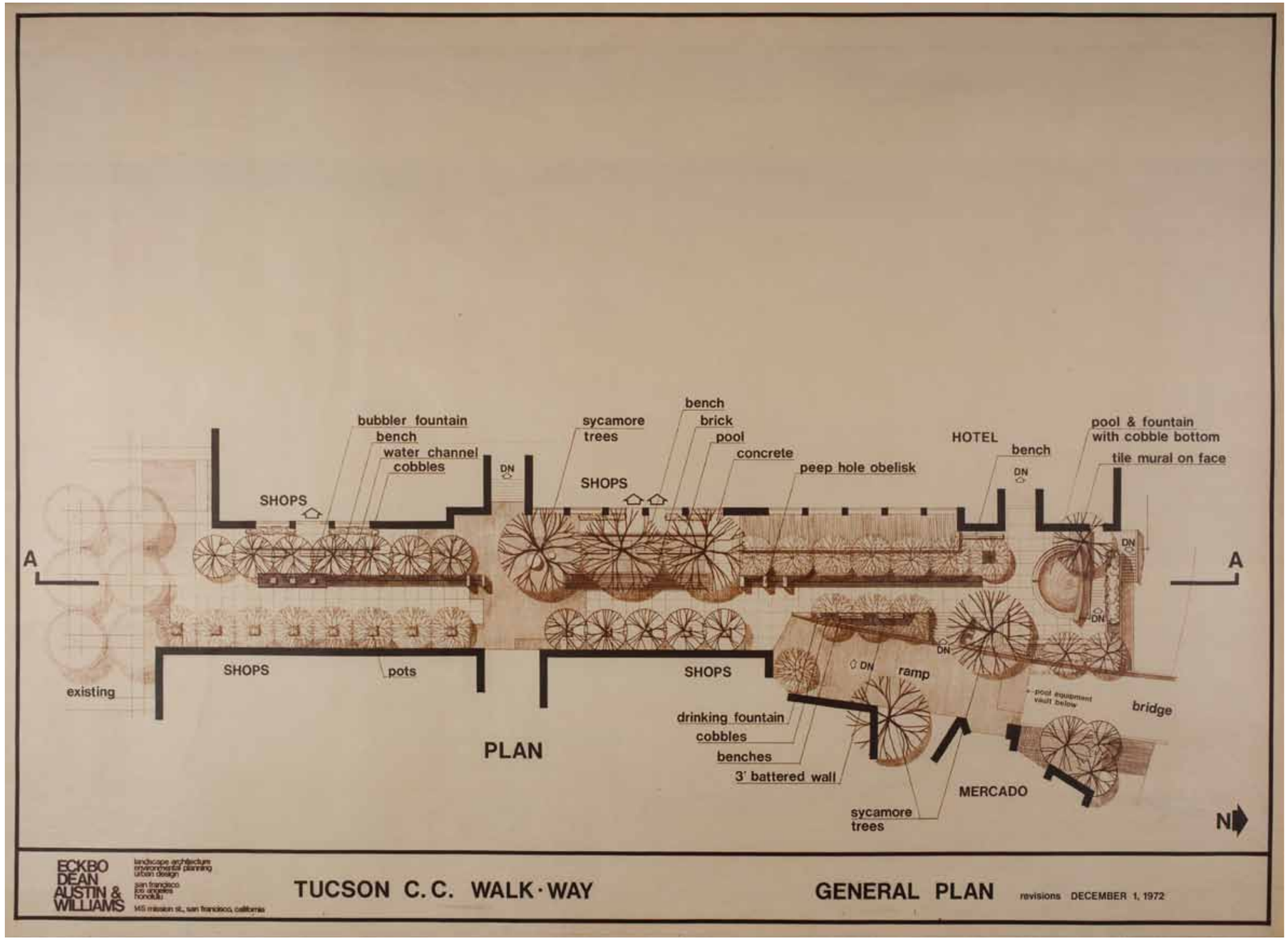
Deceptively simple, the Walkway is in fact a masterpiece of design. A linear fountain runs the length of the Walkway, from a floor fountain backed by a concrete wall in the north, through five "peep hole obelisks" in irregular groupings of three and two, under pedestrian bridges, to three pillar fountains, popularly referred to as "artesian." Whereas a lesser designer might have sought symmetry within this irregular corridor, Eckbo set the water channel to one side, balancing this with an irregular planting of trees, which today include a group of magnificent, mature Arizona sycamores. The materials chosen for the Walkway deliberately contrast with those of the Plaza and Veinte de Agosto Park. Blue ceramic tile, scored concrete paving, intersecting brick pathways, cobbles, concrete and metal sculpture are materials found only in this section of the Landscape.

The Walkway links La Placita Village Plaza to the Fountain Plaza. This linear plaza is characterized by a dense tree canopy which creates a shaded valley running along a rivulet framed by concrete arches echoing southern Spain. This is a popular place to sit and chat or read, or to stroll.

The condition of the Walkway is fair. Some of the older trees are in good to excellent condition, including specimens of Arizona sycamore, yellow oleander and Aleppo pine. The paving of both the pedestrian path and the edges of the water channel are well maintained. The electrical system, both for water circulation and for lighting, has failed. Currently, the fountain is not functional.

A number of condition issues affect the Walkway including:

- The tile lining of the channel requires cleaning; the damaged tiles need to be replaced.
- Some mosaic tiles lining the channel arches need to be replaced.
- Missing trees, mainly on the east side of the passage, need to be replaced.
- The fountain at the head of the Walkway needs repair; the provenance of the sculpture and painting associated with this fountain should be investigated, to determine whether repair or removal is indicated.
- Two water fountains, contributing elements, need stabilization and restoration.



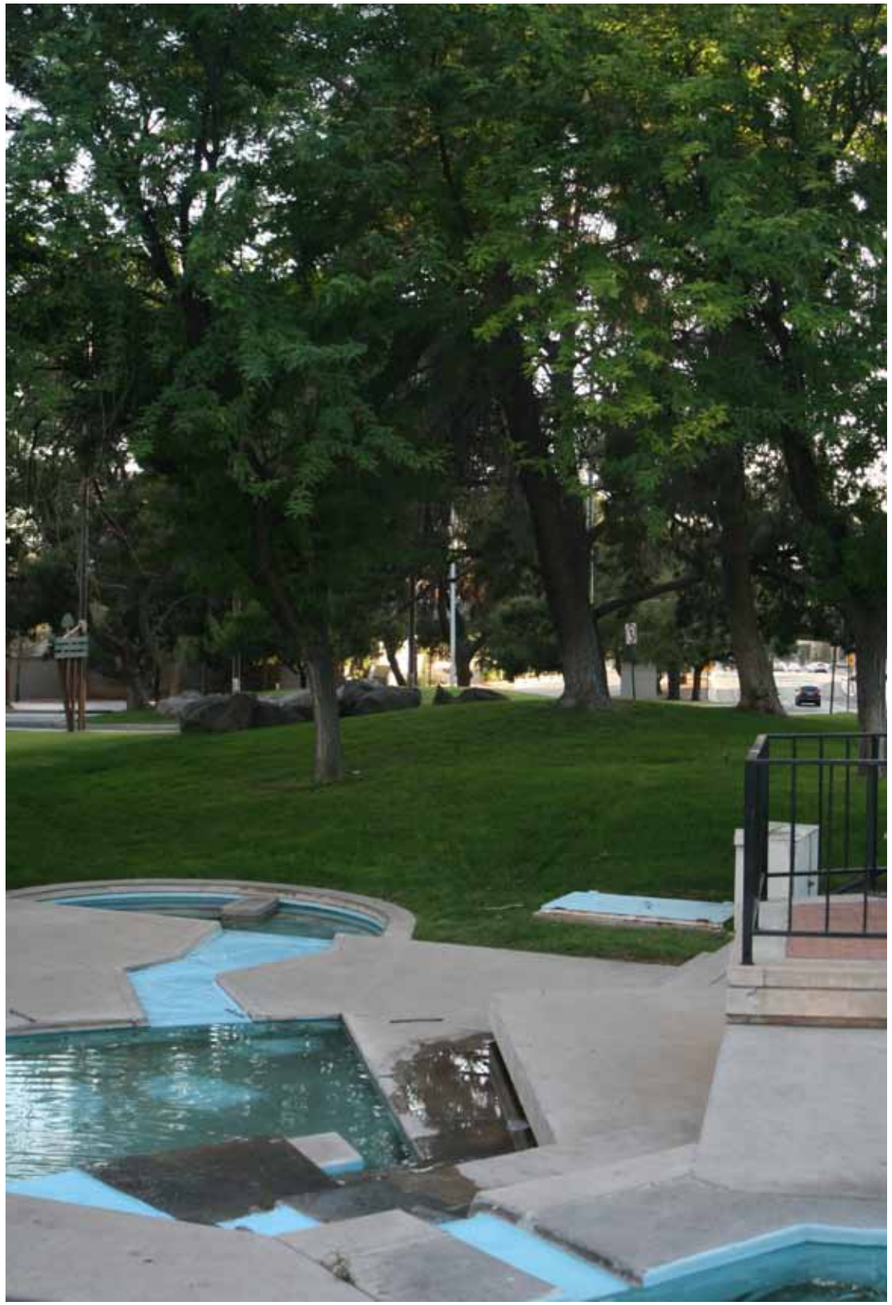
OPPOSITE LEFT
Walkway Fountain
THPF 2012

OPPOSITE RIGHT TOP
Walkway Fountain Wall Detail
THPF 2012

OPPOSITE RIGHT BOTTOM
Peep Hole Obelisk
THPF 2012

RIGHT
Concept plan for the Walkway
Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1)
Environmental Design Archives
University of California, Berkeley

VEINTE DE AGOSTO PARK



VEINTE DE AGOSTO PARK

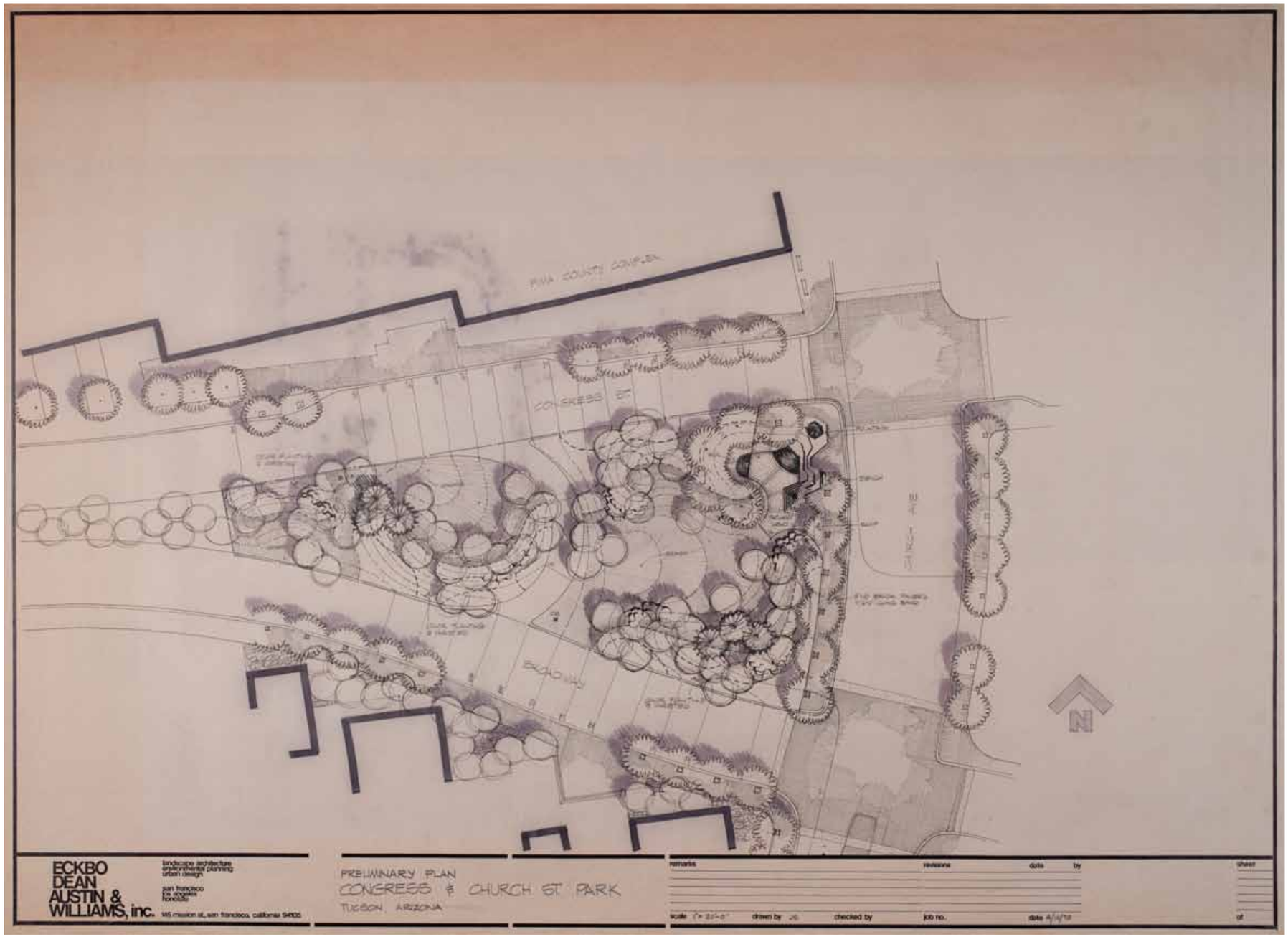
Veinte de Agosto Park, sometimes also referred to as "Eckbow Park" (sic), lies to the north of block 510. It does not have a Pima County parcel number, but it is an ordinanced City of Tucson park, named in honor of the founding of Tucson Presidio on August 20th, 1775). This triangle of land is bounded on the east by Church Avenue, on the north by Congress Street, and on the south by Broadway Boulevard. Broadway and Congress come together at the western point of the triangle. The area of the park is approximately equal to 1.1 acres as calculated from the City of Tucson GIS website.

Confined within this triangle of streets, the Park flows southwest, originating from a geometric fountain with an octagonal upper basin and a semicircular collection pool in the northeast corner. Angular steps frame a series of concrete terraces that encourage entering the Park along the edge of the fountain channel. Irregular grassy berms frame a wash leading downward to the southwest from the fountain to focus on the steps leading up to the plaza area of La Placita Village across Broadway Boulevard. As in the Fountain Plaza, boulders tumble down the slope and pines frame the view of the Tucson Mountains to the west. Looking across the Park to the north, the Park provides a setting for the Pima County Court buildings across Congress Street. This is a popular location for lunching and enjoying the trees, grass and water.

Veinte de Agosto Park supplies a visual and physical link between the arts district of Congress Street and the commercial and performance venues of the La Placita Village, the Leo Rich Theater, the Music Hall and the Arena/Convention Center. In addition, it serves as a popular lunch and break area, and as an informal gathering place for young and old, while offering a welcoming, shaded landscape to drivers on Congress Street and Broadway Boulevard. Finally, it frames the view of the court buildings of Presidio Plaza.

The condition of this section of the Landscape is good. As with the other areas, mature trees provide structure and shade. The mechanical system supporting the fountain is functioning. Conditions affecting the park include:

- The fountain is painted an inappropriate blue color.
- Art works have been introduced without considering the original design intent.
- Park signage is inappropriately designed and placed.
- Original shrubs have been removed or have died.



OPPOSITE LEFT
Fountain, Veinte de Agosto Park
THPF 2012

OPPOSITE TOP
Veinte de Agosto Park
THPF 2012

OPPOSITE BOTTOM
Stylistically compatible but not original bench
Veinte de Agosto Park
THPF 2012

RIGHT
Preliminary Plan for Veinte de Agosto Park
Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1)
Environmental Design Archives
University of California, Berkeley

HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE

The history of Tucson epitomizes the restless migration of people and ideas, the integration of north and south, east and west. Life can be tenuous in the desert, and living on the edge challenges creativity.

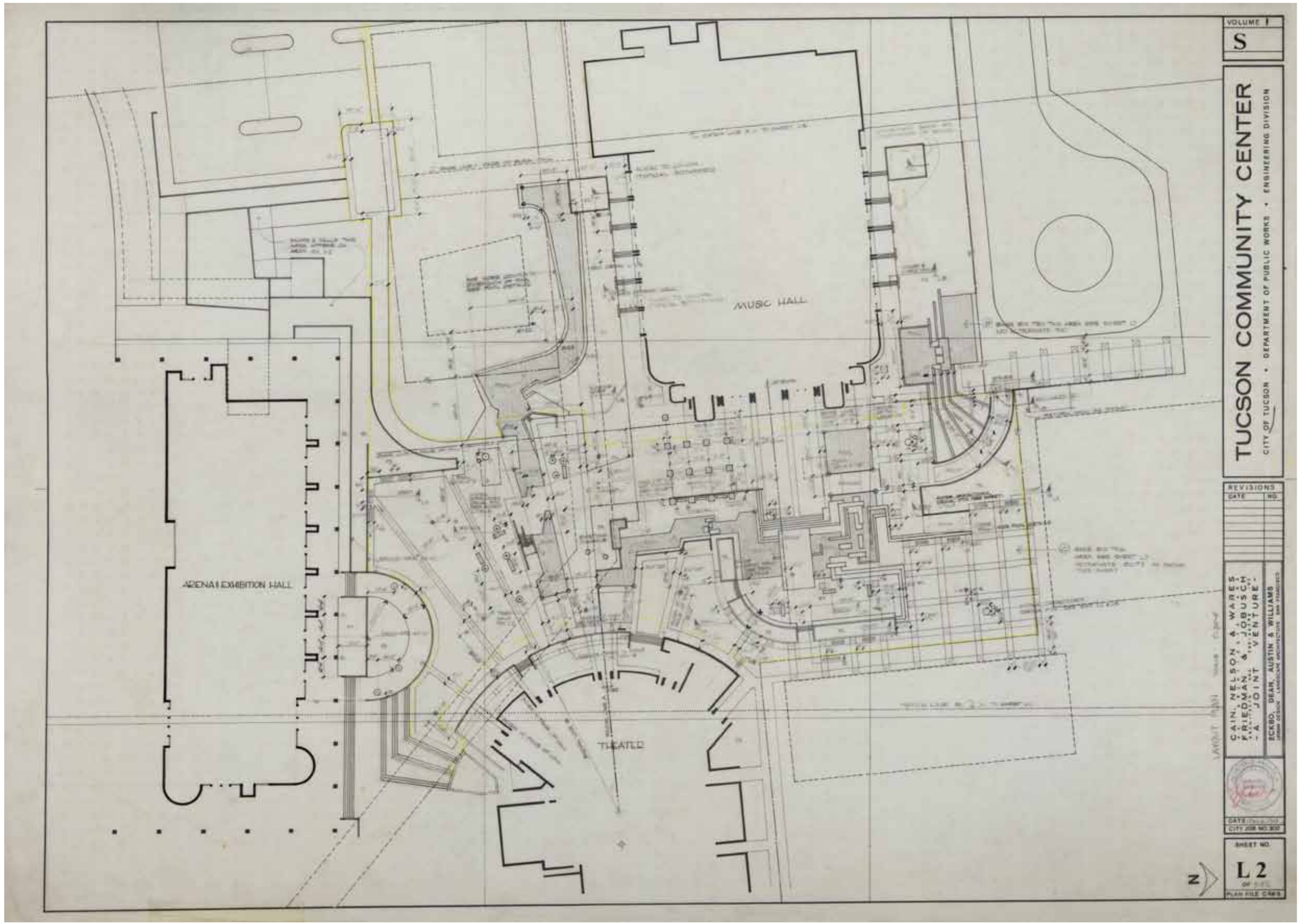
In the Tucson Community Center Landscape, Garrett Eckbo was able to draw together significant aspects of Tucson's environment, and its cultural and Anglo/Mexican heritage. Ceci Garcia, Tucson artist, recalls a presentation of Eckbo's plan in which reference was made to the fountains of Chapultepec Park in Mexico City. Beyond such a specific link to Mexican culture, Eckbo's vision encompassed the natural environment of mountains, trees and water, and the institutional cultural contribution of Cathedral, Theater, Music Hall and Arena. In short, this Landscape celebrates the synthesis that is Tucson.

Just as we have worked to protect other chapters in our heritage story, we must now recognize and protect the chapter of Modernism in Tucson. Sometimes the recent past is so close to us that we find it hard to see. For this very reason we must be careful to afford this era of our history the same respect we pay to our more distant past.

Historic resources have significant economic value for the community. Renovation of a historic asset invariably has been shown to be more cost-effective than new construction, both in terms of expended energy and in life-cycle cost efficiency. In the short term, renovation jobs almost always go to local people; and in the long term, an attractive, historic city center will attract the kind of high tech companies that are most likely to benefit Tucson. The appearance of economic health and stability in downtown areas is understood as a reflection of the quality of institutional and financial leadership in a city. Potential investors perceive a well-kept, well-preserved downtown as an indication of a stable business environment.

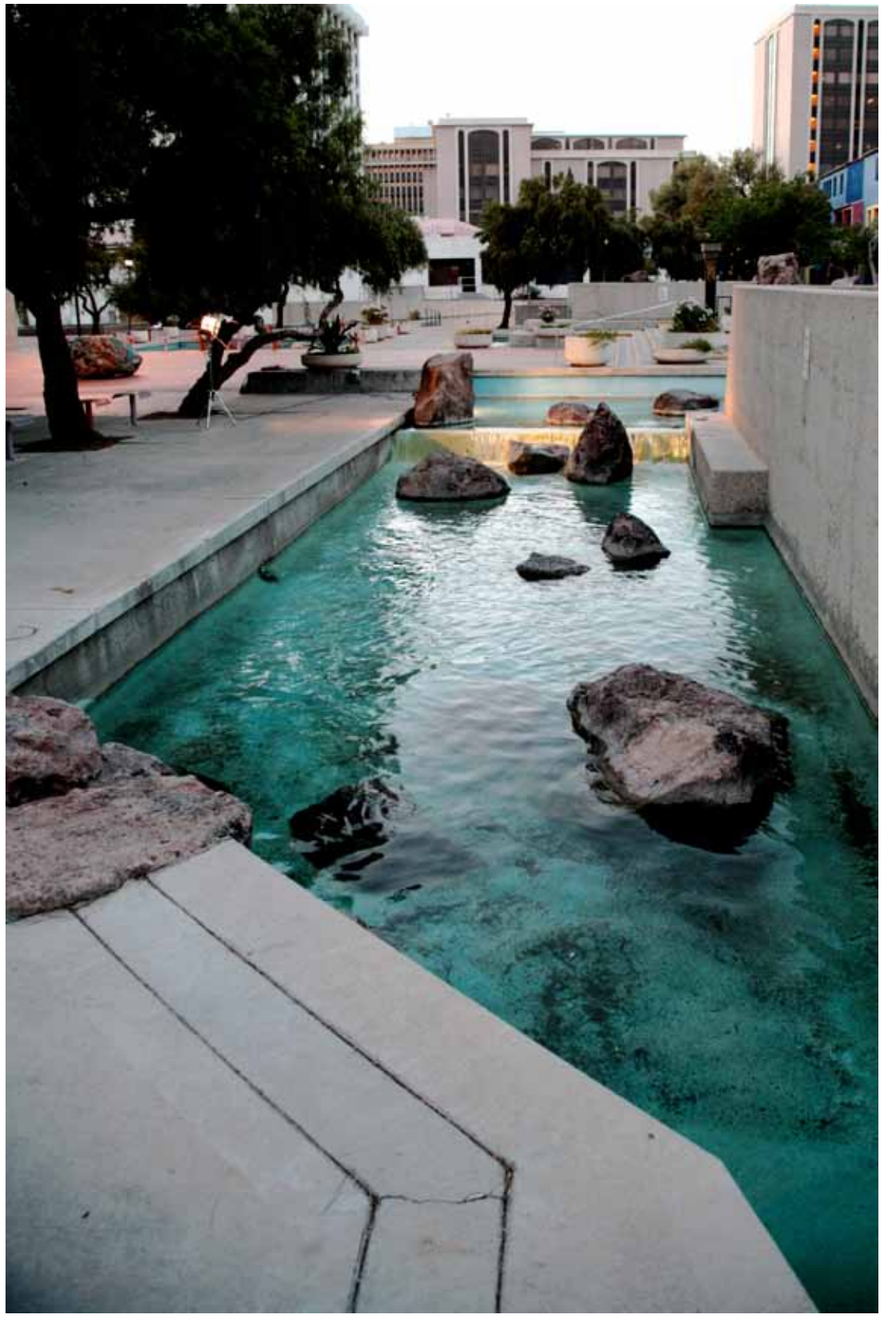
A number of mathematical models have been devised for determining the economic value of historic preservation in terms of local job creation and long-term cost/benefit. Recent research led by Donovan Rypkema of PlaceEconomics provides a sound basis for such calculations.

From case studies we can learn how other communities have utilized comparable assets to revitalize their downtown centers. Analyzing both successes and failures will help us to develop an effective process for the improvement of Tucson's urban center. Charlottesville Mall in Charlottesville, Virginia (designed by Lawrence Halprin), and the Eckbo-designed Fulton Mall in Fresno, California, should be included among these case studies. Studies of Lovejoy Fountain Park in Portland, Oregon (Lawrence Halprin), and the Fort Worth Water Garden in Texas (Philip Johnson), will provide a basis for analyzing issues of risk management.



OPPOSITE
Fountain Plaza
fotovitamina 2012

RIGHT
Construction Plan
Special Collections
University of Arizona Libraries



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Eckbo Landscape at the Tucson Community Center should be protected and maintained as an important resource contributing to the revitalization of the downtown area.

CONSERVATION

- An appropriate plan for the repair and rehabilitation of the hardscape should be developed in consultation with a historic landscape architect, following treatment recommendations summarized in Appendix 3.
- A description of work and schedule for the repair of the hardscape should be determined in consultation with the City Historic Preservation Office and the Tucson Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee.
- An expert in fountain maintenance should be consulted to assess the mechanical systems and develop an appropriate plan for the repair and scheduled future maintenance of the historic fountains.
- An appropriate plan for the rehabilitation of vegetation in the Landscape should be developed in consultation with a landscape architect, or through a partnership with the University of Arizona School of Landscape Architecture and Planning. A plan for irrigation and scheduled maintenance of the vegetation must accompany this rehabilitation plan.
- Artwork judged incompatible with the Landscape should be relocated to other downtown locations in consultation with the Tucson Pima Arts Council Public Art Committee, in accordance with the City's Relocation and Deaccession Process for Public Art.

DOCUMENTATION AND INVENTORIES

- The Upper Plaza, the Fountain Plaza, the Walkway and Veinte de Agosto Park should be fully documented in a National Register Nomination and a Historic American Landscape Survey with measured drawings.
- The essential reports and inventories listed in Appendix 4 should be completed. These include a condition report, a risk assessment report, an inventory of art objects, an inventory of signage and a historic tree inventory.

LEFT
Fountain Plaza
fotovitamina 2012

OPPOSITE
THPF 2012

PROGRAM

- The public must be informed of the significance of the Landscape through multiple media, among these TV and radio, internet, signage on the site, insertion into the "Turquoise Trail" itinerary, presentations to local neighborhood associations and service clubs, involvement of historic preservation organizations, and joint projects with the University of Arizona.

- In consultation with community groups and downtown business groups, a program for the use of the revitalized space must be developed. An organization or individual must be selected to coordinate such activities. Further suggestions for the development of an appropriate program are listed in Appendix 2.

- A major celebratory event, or series of events, should be planned for Fall 2013, perhaps to celebrate the forty-second anniversary of the dedication of the TCC on November 6, 1971.

PLANNING AND OVERSIGHT

- Design guidelines should be developed in consultation with the Tucson Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee to provide a basis for future development of the site and any development within its immediate area. These guidelines should take into account characteristic features of the designed landscape such as berms, boulders, vegetation and viewsheds.

- A management plan should be prepared to provide a structure for the integration of inter-jurisdictional maintenance, use and development by the many constituencies involved in the Tucson Community Center Landscape. All proposed alterations to the Landscape should be reviewed by the Tucson Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee.

- A formal review of both condition and program should take place at three-year intervals by the Tucson Historic Preservation Office in consultation with the Tucson Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee.

CONCLUSION

Garrett Eckbo's Tucson Community Center Landscape presents an opportunity and a challenge for art and historic conservation planning. The process has been initiated in a gracious and responsible way by the Tucson Pima Arts Council. It must now be expanded to include formal consideration by other constituencies within the Tucson preservation community.

Tucson is fortunate to have a Modern masterpiece to anchor and revitalize the downtown area. Garrett Eckbo was one of the first landscape architects to recognize the unique challenges of a desert environment and propose the use of arid land and native plants in his designs. In the Tucson Community Center Landscape we have a prototype of design that is now considered mainstream. In addition, this Landscape is unique in that it is the only civic plaza in Arizona designed by Eckbo.

Initiating essential mechanical repairs and developing a creative program to draw more people into the Landscape must go hand in hand with longer term planning. Case studies from comparable projects can offer examples of how this has been done successfully elsewhere.

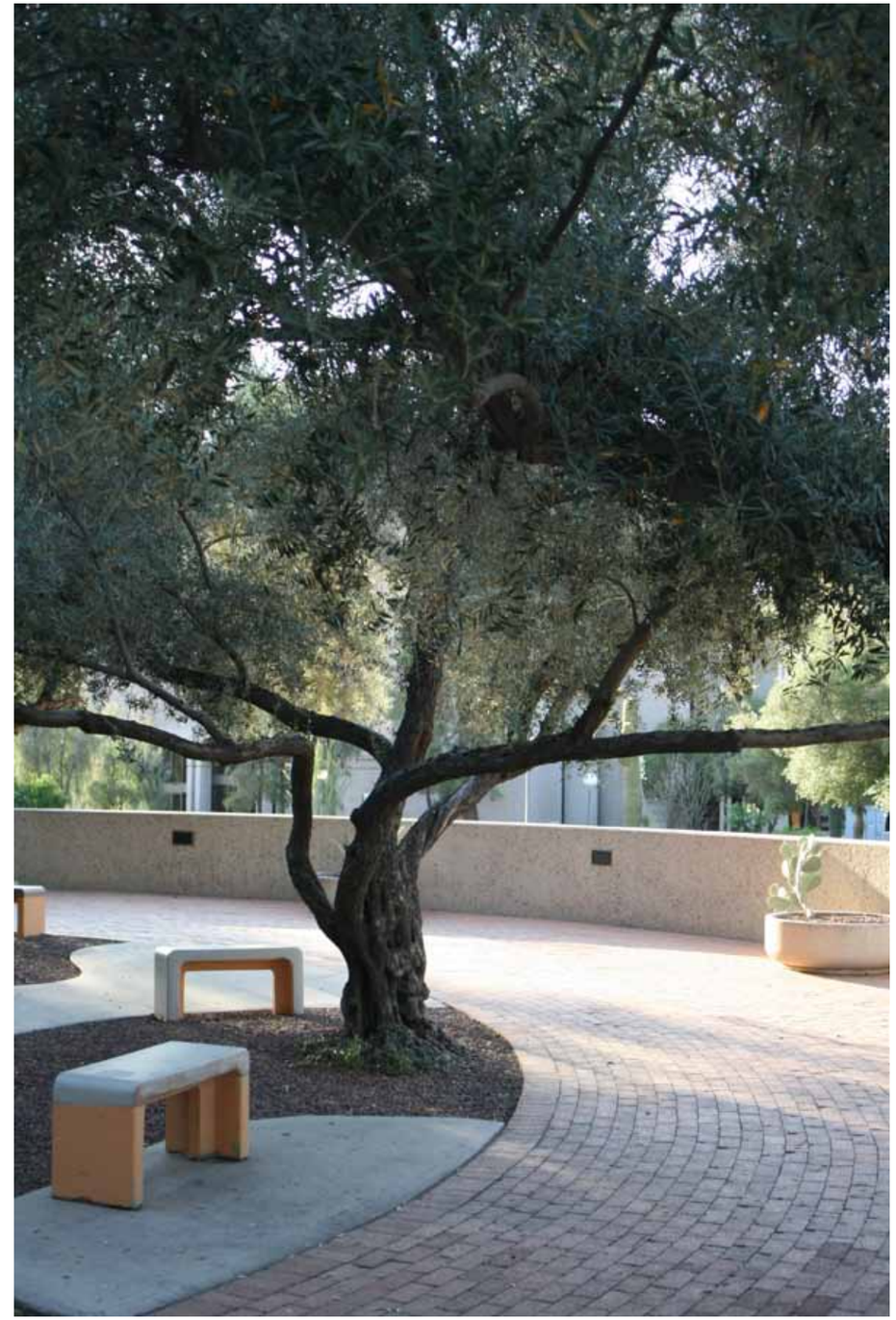
In addition to rehabilitation, this project presents unusual creative potential. Although the existing Landscape is a completed masterwork, a section of the originally designed waterworks was never constructed due to budgetary constraints. All the technical drawings completed by Eckbo are archived at Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries. This presents an unusual opportunity to execute the intended master design.

While some communities are thoughtlessly destroying their Modern heritage, Tucson has the opportunity to use the Tucson Community Center Landscape as a catalyst for economic redevelopment, attracting and retaining the technology firms that we already serve so well.

Dull, inert cities, it is true, do contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. But lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves.

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Successive earlier generations of Tucsonans have realized that heritage is the source of civic reinvention. The presence of the Tucson Community Center Landscape offers a unique opportunity to achieve a culturally rich future within a remarkable historic context.



RIGHT
Fountain Plaza
THPF 2012

OPPOSITE LEFT
Fountain Plaza
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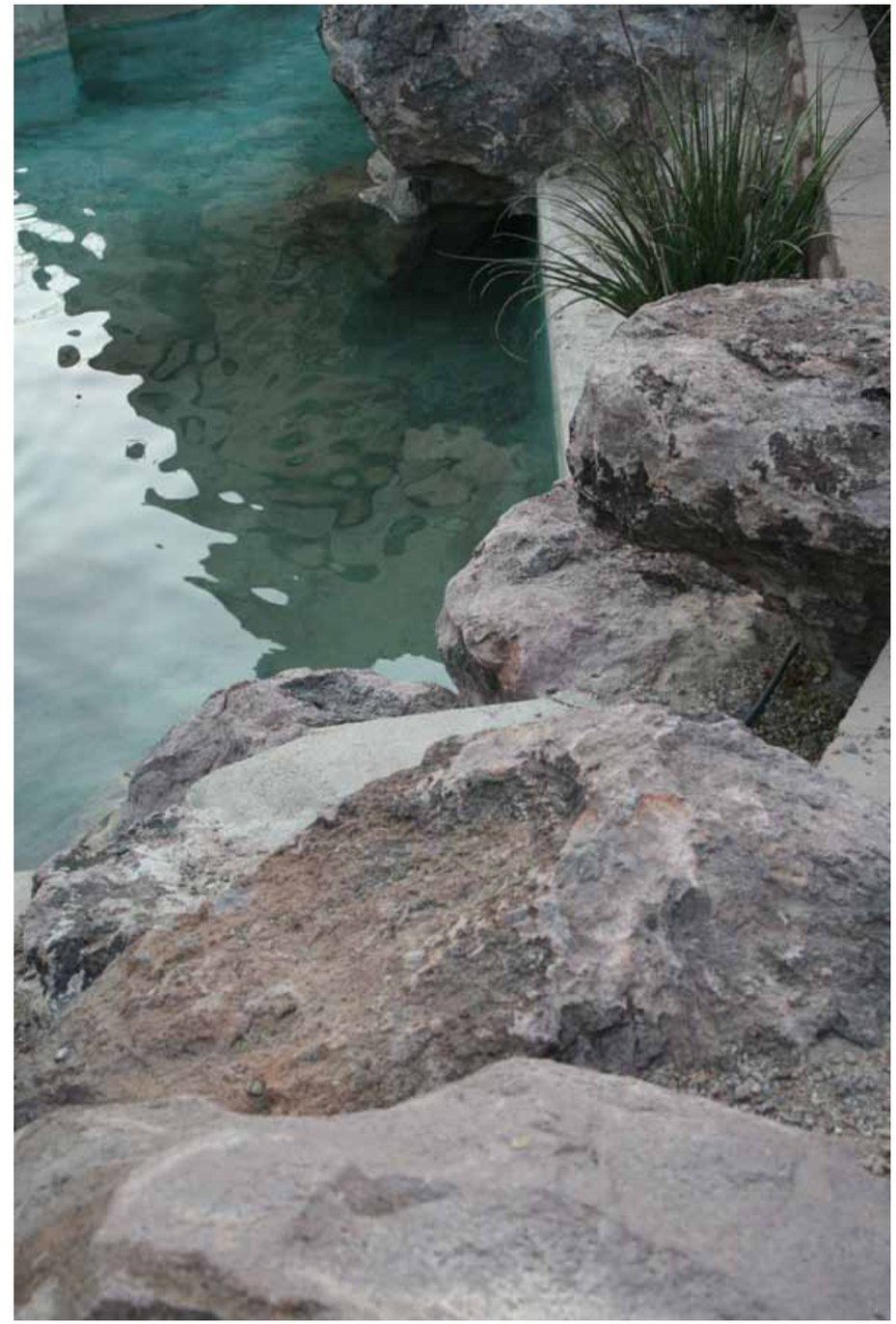
OPPOSITE RIGHT
Fountain Plaza
fotovitamina 2012



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

During the fall of 2010, Emily Yetman, MLA, then a Landscape Architect in Residency at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Tucson, raised concerns about the lack of knowledge and the deteriorating condition of the Tucson Community Center Landscape. At the time it was facing condemnation by the City of Tucson, and few people remembered that it had been designed by Garrett Eckbo. As a result of her initial research, which included locating plans that firmly linked the Landscape to the work of the master landscape architect, a description and photographs of the Landscape were placed on the website of the Cultural Landscape Foundation, where it was officially listed as a "threatened landscape".

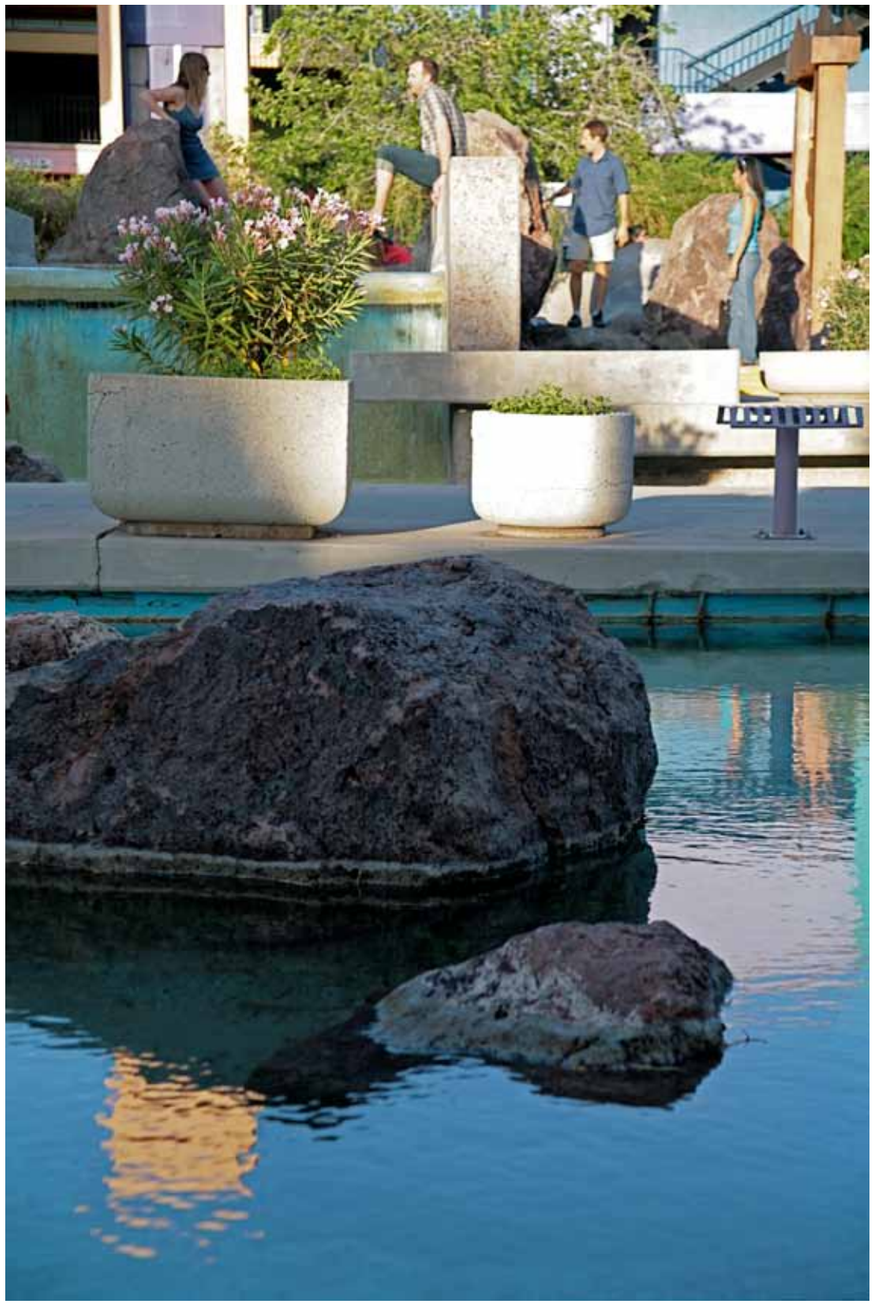
On January 6, 2012, Fred Gray, Director of the City of Tucson Department of Parks and Recreation, submitted a Deaccession Request for the Tucson Community Center Landscape to the Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC) in accordance with the City's Administrative Directive on Public Art. TPAC is the designated local arts agency for the City of Tucson and Pima County. Part of TPAC's role is to ensure the ongoing presence and integrity of public art. In the request, Gray cited concerns about the feasibility of repairs, the need for costly maintenance, and issues of public safety.

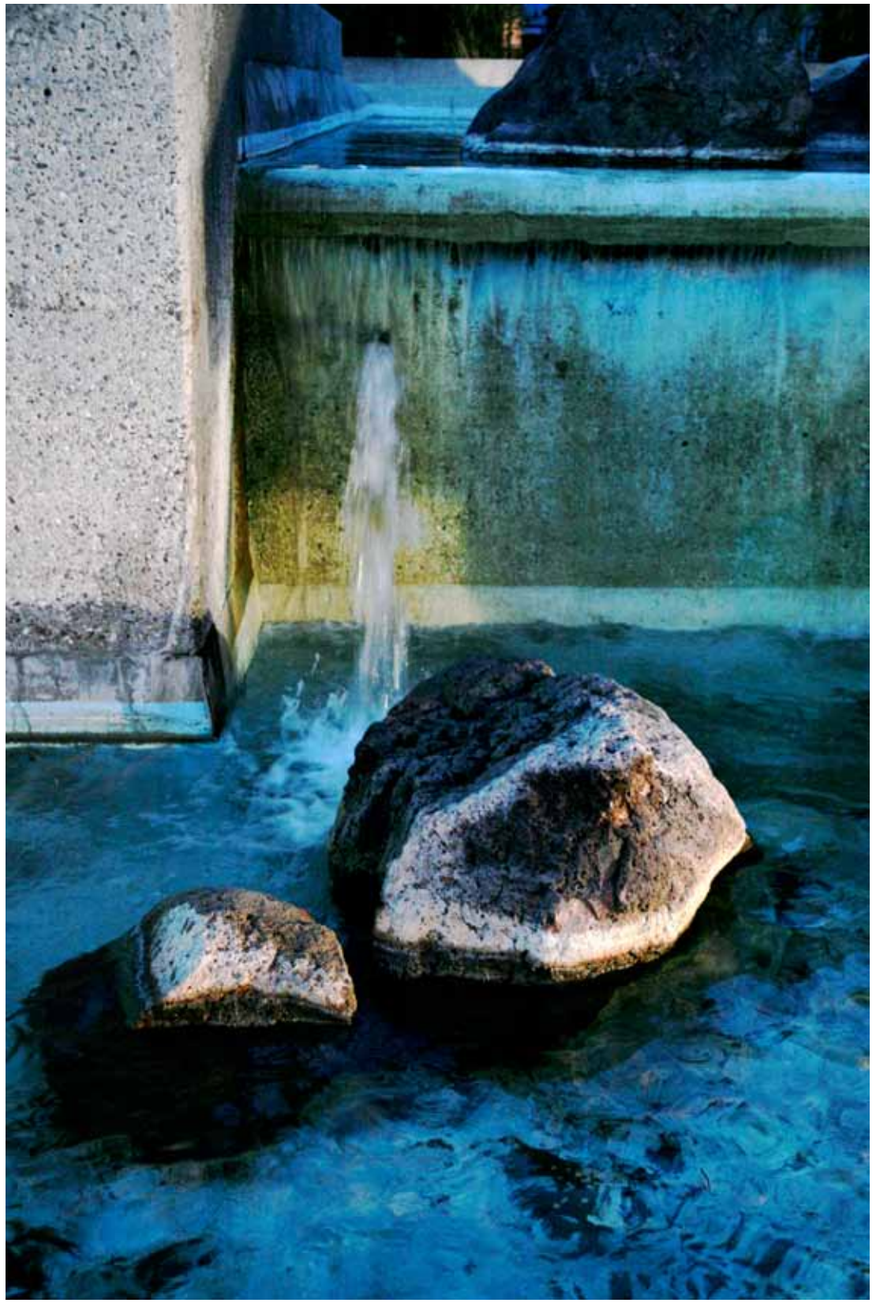
The TPAC deaccession process was developed to provide guidance and recommendations for the long-term management of public art. The Tucson Community Center Landscape is not a single artwork or installation, but rather a complex grouping of design features and relationships, some of which are contributing elements to the historic landscape and some of which are individual art works unrelated to the character of the site.

The Deaccession Request initiated a formal review process, conducted by TPAC on behalf of the City of Tucson. A Subcommittee of the Public Art and Community Design Committee composed of Corky Poster (Principal, Poster Frost Mirto and Tucson Pima Arts Council Board of Directors), Darlene Showalter (Landscape Architect, McGann & Associates & Public Art and Community Design Committee), Demion Clinco (President, Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation and Arizona State Advisor, National Trust For Historic Preservation), Dorothée Harmon (Manager, Pima Community Public Art and Community Design Committee), Emily Yetman (Landscape Architect, Living Streets Alliance), Herb Stratford (President, Historic Theater Consultants and preservation specialist), Randy Hansen (Tucson Pima Arts Council Board of Directors and Public Art & Community Design Committee), and Peg Weber (District Administrator, City of Tucson Parks and Recreation - a non-voting member).

To facilitate the Subcommittee's work, Demion Clinco asked Helen Erickson, a third-year graduate student in Landscape Architecture and Heritage Conservation at the University of Arizona, to prepare a draft conservation plan for the Tucson Community Center Landscape. As partial fulfillment of the requirements for Planning 564 (Preservation Planning Issues), she prepared an initial document under the direction of Dr. William Patrick O'Brien, National Park Service. During the period from May to early July 2012, she revised her work under the direction of Demion Clinco as an intern for the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation. She is now working on a full Historic American Landscapes Survey with Darlene Showalter and preparing a National Historic Register Nomination.

A number of people have provided substantive commentary and editorial assistance in the review of this document. Special thanks are due to Gina Chorover, R. Brooks Jeffery, Dorothee Harmon, Ann Vargas, and Mary Ellen Wooten.





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APPENDIX 2: BRINGING PEOPLE INTO THE LANDSCAPE

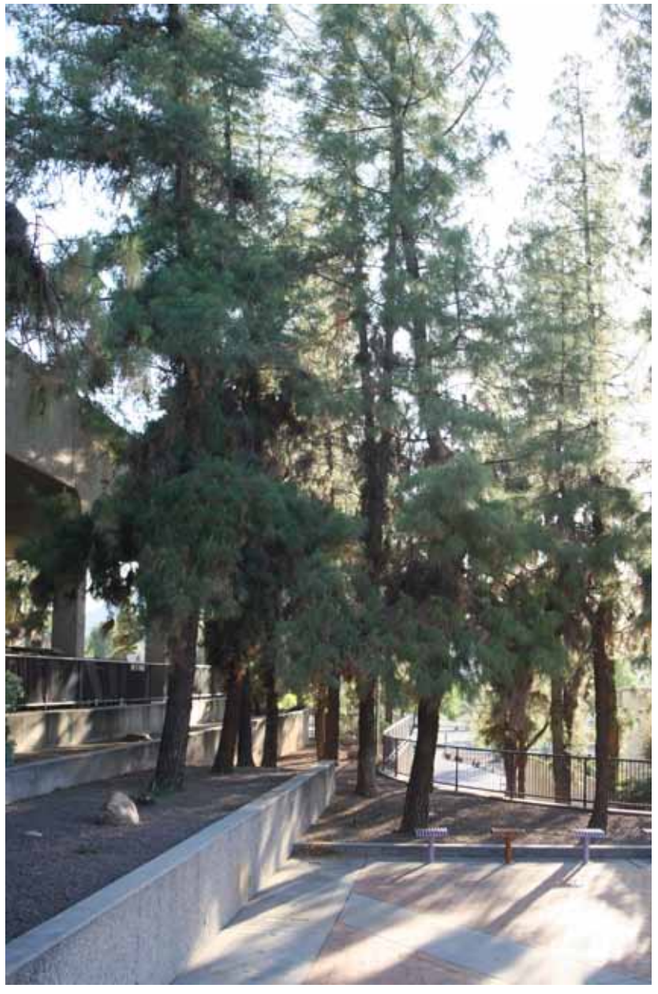
A significant part of conservation planning for the Tucson Community Center Landscape requires making the general public aware of the value of the resource by developing initiatives to encourage use by both Tucsonans and visitors. Over the years, original efforts to invite a wide variety of people to enjoy this beautiful resource have waned.

A cursory analysis of the frequency of use of the terms "Tucson Community Center" and "Tucson Convention Center" indicates that until the mid-1990s, most references were to "Tucson Community Center". After that time the use of "Tucson Convention Center" became progressively dominant. This reflects a parallel decline in the use of the Tucson Community Center as a community resource rather than as a place dedicated to special events catering to visitors. It no longer drew people from across the community, and some began to see it as an unsafe place to visit.

The lack of a program for the outdoor space, other than as a forecourt for events in the Theater, Music Hall or Arena, is largely responsible. The original concept emphasized the use of the landscape for outdoor dining, informal performance and casual shopping. While the adjacent La Placita Village has been unable to provide the critical mass to support such activities, there are other ways to provide the public with opportunities to return to a place that was designed with them in mind. Among these are a number of classic options: seasonal celebrations; school trips; music, dance or street theater performances; social or folk dance activities; art shows; food trucks; and wireless internet connection. Planning for dynamic utilization is fundamental to revitalization of the Landscape.

Providing information about the Landscape in many different forms will also encourage visitors. It appears that a large number of people are unaware of the resource, and some even believe that it no longer exists. Suggestions for communication include:

- Informing the public through radio, TV, newspapers, websites, and social media such as Facebook.
- Involving visitors with the space through interpretive signage, descriptive fliers at the Tucson Visitors Center, walking tours, and interactive web-based media.
- Inviting surrounding communities to visit through individual communication, discussion at neighborhood associations and service clubs, and connecting with downtown business groups.
- Linking the academic community to the site through class projects and service organizations, offering walking or bike tours of downtown to new University of Arizona and Pima College students, providing guest lectures in appropriate classes, and developing an exhibition of Eckbo landscapes.
- Targeting the heritage community through postings on cultural landscape and historic preservation sites, talking to Tucson heritage groups, and informing members of historical societies through conference presentations.



OPPOSITE TOP
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OPPOSITE BOTTOM
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OPPOSITE
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APPENDIX 3: RECOMMENDED TREATMENT

TREATMENT STANDARDS
The anticipated eligibility determination for the National Register of Historic Places requires that site treatment conform to The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. This reference includes guidelines for the rehabilitation of plantings as well as hardscape.

The standards are defined as follows:

- Protection And Stabilization

Provide temporary, often emergency measures to prevent deterioration or failure without altering the landscape's historic character. These measures are generally considered preparatory to the other treatments.

- Preservation

Maintains the form, materials, and features of the landscape as it has evolved over time, acknowledging its growth, loss and change.

- Rehabilitation

Retains the landscape as it has evolved historically by maintaining and repairing historic features, while allowing additions and alterations for contemporary and future uses.

- Restoration

Depicts an appearance that existed during the landscape's most significant period by removing later additions, and rebuilding or replanting earlier features.

- Reconstruction

Re-creates a vanished or non-surviving landscape with new materials.

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommended preliminary treatment for the Tucson Community Center Landscape is Protection and Stabilization. This is defined by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as temporary measures to prevent deterioration without altering the landscape's historic character. Protection and Stabilization measures are considered preparatory to other treatments. Vulnerable character-defining features of the landscape should be identified and stabilized. In the case of the Tucson Community Center Landscape, this means that emergency health and safety measures, such as shutting down a malfunctioning electrical system, should be undertaken in a way that will have minimal impact not only on the long-term condition but also on the immediate aesthetic appearance of the Landscape. An intensified cleaning schedule will help to prevent vandalism of what could otherwise be perceived as a condemned site. This should be undertaken immediately.

The overall Treatment for the Landscape, to be followed subsequent to Protection and Stabilization, is Rehabilitation. Rehabilitation retains the landscape as it has evolved historically by maintaining and repairing historic features, while allowing additions and alterations for contemporary and future uses. It permits appropriate updating for health and safety and for ADA access (which has already been implemented at the site).

APPENDIX 4: ESSENTIAL REPORTS AND DOCUMENTATION

The high cultural value of the Tucson Community Center Landscape mandates pursuing several different types of documentation, some of which will record and preserve information on history and design and some of which will provide a baseline of existing site conditions.

A CONDITION REPORT will note and prioritize issues requiring attention in order to develop a plan for the preservation and maintenance of the Tucson Community Center Landscape. Such a report should deal with mechanical systems, walls, paving, lighting and vegetation, among other features. This report has not been undertaken at this time, but it should be initiated as soon as possible.

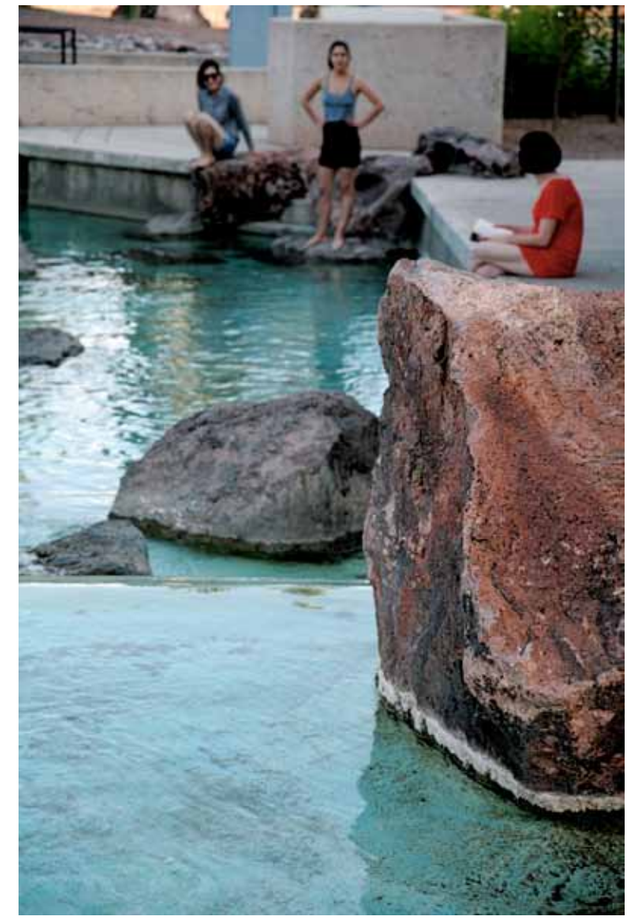
A RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT will investigate concerns of safety and public access to the site. Other public facilities, such as Lovejoy Fountain Park designed by Lawrence Halprin (Portland, Oregon) and the Fort Worth Water Garden designed by Philip Johnson (Fort Worth, Texas), have found ways to manage such issues successfully while continuing to permit full public access to these landscapes.

An INVENTORY OF ART OBJECTS will identify and evaluate the placement of the numerous art works within the Tucson Community Center Landscape.

An INVENTORY OF SIGNAGE will identify and evaluate the placement of the numerous signs within the Tucson Community Center Landscape.

A HISTORIC TREE INVENTORY will identify and evaluate the condition of the many mature trees within the Tucson Community Center Landscape.

A HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY will document the history and structure of the Landscape in order to make this information available on-line to everyone through the Library of Congress. This program, following in the footsteps of the Historic American Buildings Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record, was put in place in 2000 as a joint project of the American Society of Landscape Architects and the National Park Service. Two survey formats are available: an introductory (short) form, and a full (long) form. The long form requires measured drawings of the as-built site, along with an intensive history and large-format black and white photography. Darlene Showalter and Helen Erickson are hoping to complete the long-form survey during the course of summer 2012.



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A NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION will provide the in-depth information essential to determining the eligibility of the Tucson Community Center Landscape for listing on Local, State or National Historic Register. Listing will offer an acknowledgment of the historic value of the Landscape to the City, State or Nation. Listing on the Register also provides some protection for historic landscapes by requiring that a mandated process be followed to consider effects of major change or demolition.

The Tucson Community Center Landscape is nationally significant as an outstanding embodiment of the goals of Modern landscape design as presented in Eckbo's numerous theoretical writings. In many ways a classic Mid-Century Modern design, it also draws heavily on Eckbo's personal beliefs about the nature of people and their needs within a landscape. Given its significance, a nomination for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places is now being undertaken. The nomination is scheduled to be submitted to the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office by Fall 2012.

An INVENTORY OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES is a required section of a National Register Nomination.

In addition to these reports, a STUDY OF COMPARABLE PUBLIC RESOURCES should be undetaken. Sites for comparison should include

- Fulton Mall, Fresno, CA (Garrett Eckbo)
- Union Bank Square, Los Angeles, CA (Garrett Eckbo)
- Charlottesville Mall, Charlottesville, VA (Lawrence Halprin)
- Lovejoy Fountain Park, Portland, OR (Lawrence Halprin)
- Fort Worth Water Garden, Fort Worth, TX (Phillip Johnson)

ABOVE
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OPPOSITE TOP
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OPPOSITE BOTTOM
THPF 2012

APPENDIX 5: NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER STANDARDS FOR SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY AS APPLIED TO THE TUCSON COMMUNITY CENTER

SIGNIFICANCE

The quality of significance is ascribed to collections and historic properties that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the intellectual and cultural heritage and the built environment of the United States. Resources are designated significant under one of four categories:

a. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
b. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
c. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
d. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The Tucson Community Center Landscape is nationally significant under criterion c as the work of a master and an embodiment of the goals of Modern landscape design, which were set forth in Garrett Eckbo's theoretical writings. An outstanding example of Mid-Century Modern design, it draws heavily on Eckbo's personal philosophy. One of only a handful of public spaces designed by Eckbo, and the only Eckbo plaza in Arizona, it offers a dramatic interpretation of Modern landscape principles.

Additional criteria considerations apply if the property is:

a. owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
b. removed from its original location.
c. a birthplace or grave.
d. a cemetery.
e. a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
f. a commemorative property.
g. less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

The Tucson Community Center Landscape falls under criteria consideration g, as an exception to the rule that a property must be fifty years or older in order to fulfill the requirements for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A number of works by outstanding Modern architects and landscape architects have been listed on the Register.

INTEGRITY

An important consideration for listing in the National Historic Register is whether a landscape retains the ability to project its significance according to standards set forth in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Landscapes. Seven aspects of integrity are listed as essential to significance: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling and Association.

- LOCATION

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
The Tucson Community Center Landscape is located immediately to the south/southwest of Tucson's Central Business District, in its original location.

The location of the Tucson Community Center Landscape retains integrity.

- DESIGN

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
The design of the Tucson Community Center Landscape is characteristic of Mid-Century Modern landscape architecture, as envisioned by Garrett Eckbo, who was also the recognized spokesman for the movement. His general objective was to create a dynamic equilibrium within which life could flow, expand and contract, offering infinite variation from playfulness to monumentality. Eckbo's biographer, Mark Treib, writes that the use of staggered, interlocking spaces articulated by a mixture of angled walls, often terminating in a circular space defined by an arcing wall or curving row of trees, was already apparent in Eckbo's style by the 1950s. A seminal, on-going influence of the painters Joán Miro and Vassily Kandinsky can be seen in the radiating lines of pavement emanating from an axis. These lines originate from the center point of the Leo Rich Theater, or from points adjacent to the northeast corner of the Music Hall or the northeast corner of the Arena. Imposed on this geometry are asymmetrical water channels, earthen berms and scattered boulders.

Throughout his life, Eckbo reiterated the importance of three-dimensional design. For him it was clear that people lived not only on the land but in the space above the surface of the land. For this reason landscape plans must be projections of three-dimensional space.

Design in line is only half of our technical heritage . . . the other half is design in terms of the arrangement of elements and objects in space – plants, rocks, walls, pools, the ground plane, overhead and vertical planes, and so forth.

Garrett Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*

The Landscape supplies a wide range of spatial experiences, from small-scale intimate spaces to open areas with long views reaching beyond physical boundaries. A sequential progression through the Landscape encloses and reveals, moving through fluid scenes of containment and boundlessness. Changes in level and variation in surface textures, along with planes ranging from flat to terraced to undulating, enhance this three-dimensionality. Low concrete walls, some of which become narrower as they rise, redefine the rectangular grids of trees. Rolling berms offer counterpoise to flat planes of flowing water. Traditional characteristics of design, such axial planning and bilateral symmetry, are held in check by a balanced placement of asymmetrical elements. The continuum of space offers both variety and repetition, a choreographic sequence in which the visitor may choose a direct or meandering path depending on individual need at the moment.

A subsequent ADA adaptation in the area between the Upper Plaza and Fountain Plaza does not significantly impact the original design.

The design of the Tucson Community Center Landscape retains integrity.

- SETTING

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.
Eckbo recognized that landscape was a continuous phenomenon, extending beyond the boundaries of a property. The four sections of the Tucson Community Center Landscape were designed for a context that remains essentially intact today, although the construction of the United State District Court Building at 405 West Congress Street has eliminated one important view of the Tucson Mountains from the Fountain Plaza. All other aspects of the setting are identical with or similar to the context for which Eckbo designed the Tucson Community Center.

The setting of the Tucson Community Center Landscape retains integrity.

- MATERIALS

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

The hardscape of the Tucson Community Center Landscape includes brick, concrete, stone, metal, natural rock and ceramic tile. The softscape includes trees, plants and turf.

Eckbo believed that materials should reflect their own inborn character. Bricks are intended to be modular units, building an effect through repetition and combination. Concrete is a poured, plastic product, and plants are living, breathing creatures that will grow and change over time. Rocks and water are essential elements of any landscape.

Reflecting this belief, materials are used in very specific ways in the Tucson Community Center Landscape. Brick and concrete slabs lie underfoot in traveled areas, while concrete walls form rectilinear fountains, battered walls and curved balcony or stair walls. Grid patterns of brick and concrete contain gridded groves of trees, which define their own three-dimensional space through individual patterns of growth. Earth is sculpted into turf-covered berms, planted regularly or irregularly with trees. Rocks, said to be from Sabino Canyon (in the Santa Catalina Mountains northeast of Tucson), tumble across the turfed mounds and interrupt the flow of water through the linear fountains.
Materials also separate informal activity areas from formal spaces. Wide terraces and stairways paved with brick and concrete serve as outdoor lobbies for the Arena, Music Hall and Theater, while earthen mounds covered with turf offer informal sitting areas. Larger, linear berms define a shady allée as part of the Upper Plaza and bank the sides of a meandering wash in Veinte de Agosto Park. Fountains provide walls for leaning, or sitting, or dabbling in the water. Small areas are semi-enclosed with concrete walls for more private conversation or for taking in the view.

Materials chosen for the Walkway contrast with the overall palette of the landscape. A path of scored concrete, interrupted by intersections with brick-paved cross walks, plays against a tiled fountain basin and cast concrete arches.

A subsequent ADA adaptation in the area between the Upper Plaza and Fountain Plaza is not obtrusive, but is clearly distinguishable from the original materials of the Landscape, in line with present historic preservation policy.

Many of the concrete planters from the original installation remain on site.

While many of the original shrubs have suffered from attrition, a large number of trees have flourished. Majestic Canary Island pines frame a view from the Upper Plaza across the historic Sosa-Carrillo-Fremont House to the Tucson Mountains beyond. Large eucalyptus trees shade the center of the Upper Plaza and African sumac trees frame the allée, but the trees planted on the berms south of the entrance to the Arena have not survived. Grid plantings of sumacs in the Upper and Fountain Plazas are substantially intact. Aleppo pines in Veinte de Agosto Park and mature Arizona sycamores in the Walkway remain from the original planting design. Some defunct sumacs have been replaced by other species, but this condition is easily reversible.

The materials of the Tucson Community Center Landscape retain integrity.

- FEELING

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
The Tucson Community Center expresses the optimism of its period, a presentation of Tucson as an upbeat cultural and tourist destination. Its forms and materials provide an immersion in the Mid-Century Modern style. Eckbo's distillation of a sense of place – of a city set between the natural world of the mountains and the cultural world of the Mexican-style cathedral – cannot be missed. This link to place lies at the core of Eckbo's philosophy.

Beyond this, the Tucson Community Center Landscape continues to offer the multi-sensory experience that Eckbo sought to provide through his designs. The Landscape as a whole also creates a vivid soundscape, contrasting the susurrus of wind in the trees with the muted sounds of traffic, or outdoor music performances with the varied sounds of water flowing through fountains and channels. Eckbo intended the water in the fountains to be experienced in a tactile way as well, offering a tangible contrast to the heat of Tucson summers. Heat and shade, light and shadow, sun and water, all touch the visitor moving through the space. The scent of pines permeates the edges of the Arena and the Walkway.

The feeling of the Landscape retains integrity.

- WORKMANSHIP

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
The Tucson Community Center Landscape embodies the workmanship of Garrett Eckbo, one of the foremost American landscape architects of the twentieth century.

The site has held up remarkably well during forty years of minimal maintenance. It was not, like some Modern buildings and landscapes, built of low-grade materials.

The workmanship of the Landscape retains integrity.

- ASSOCIATION

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.
The Tucson Community Center Landscape is directly linked to Garrett Eckbo, a major figure in the development of Modern landscape architecture.

The association of the Landscape retains integrity.

OPPOSITE
THPF 2012

RIGHT & MIDDLE
THFP 2012

FAR RIGHT
fotovitamina 2012

APPENDIX 6: REFERENCES

RESEARCH MATERIALS

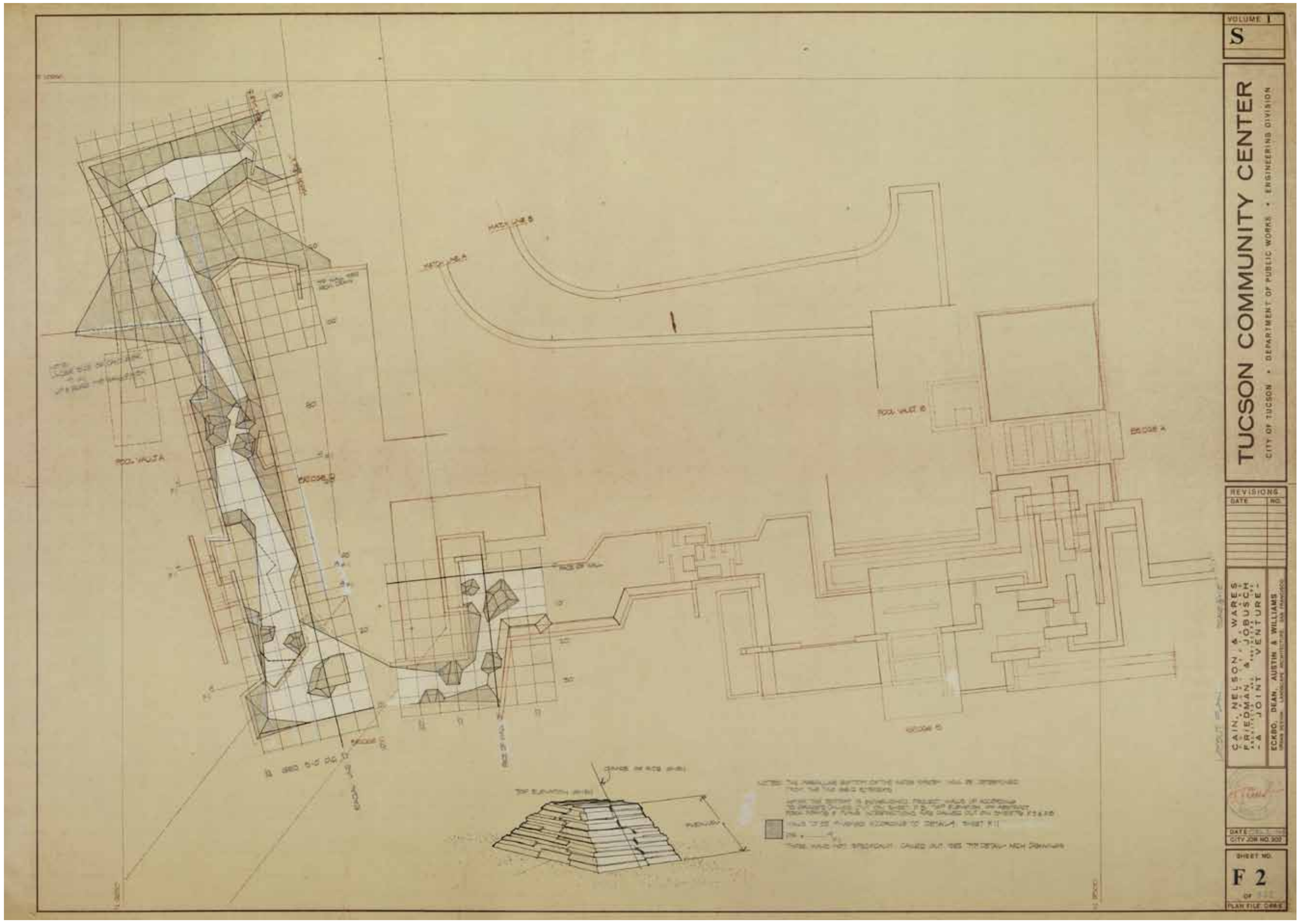
Garrett Eckbo, as the première theorist of the Modern landscape movement, was a prolific writer, with seven major books and several dozen articles to his credit. In these writings he spoke for Modern landscape architects as a group, but he also spoke for himself. He saw his profession as providing a vital connection between people and nature, and he remained, throughout his career, sensitive to the needs of those marginalized by society at large. It is clear, in reading Eckbo's comments on the Tucson Community Center Landscape, that he felt it embodied his design philosophy.

Conceptual plans for major sections of the Landscape (the Fountain Plaza, the Upper Plaza, the Walkway and Veinte de Agosto Park) are held in the Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1) at the Environmental Design Archives of the University of California, Berkeley. Construction plans for these sections and for the parking areas to the east and west of the Arena (including an area subsequently redesigned when Granada Avenue was relocated) are held by Special Collections at the University of Arizona Libraries. These plans include detailed construction drawings of plumbing and electrical systems for the fountains, grading plans and planting plans.

Photographs of the site during construction and during its first few years can be found at the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson and at the Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley. There are also a significant number of later photographs available in books and periodicals.

Two other existing Eckbo urban/suburban landscapes, studied for comparison, are the Fulton Mall in Fresno, California, and the Union Bank Square in Los Angeles, California. The Fulton Mall listed is on the California State Historic Register. It was not listed on the National Register of Historic Places because more than 50% of the property owners contested the designation.

As one of only a half-dozen urban/suburban landscapes designed by Eckbo during his long career, the Tucson Community Center Landscape is anticipated to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Both a National Register Nomination and a Historic American Landscapes Survey with measured drawings of the existing site are in progress.



OPPOSITE TOP
fotovitamina 2012

OPPOSITE BOTTOM
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RIGHT
Special Collections
University of Arizona Libraries

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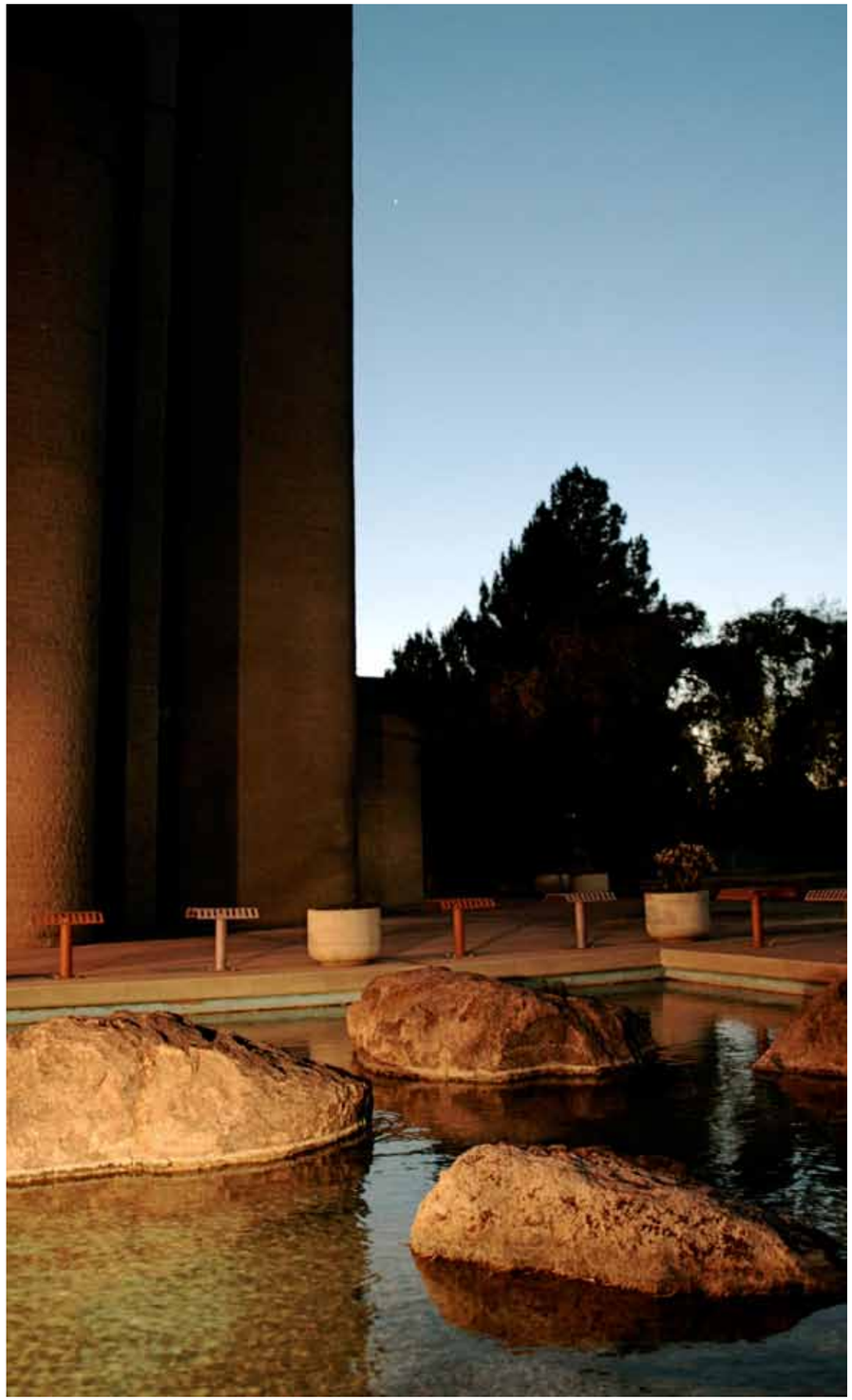

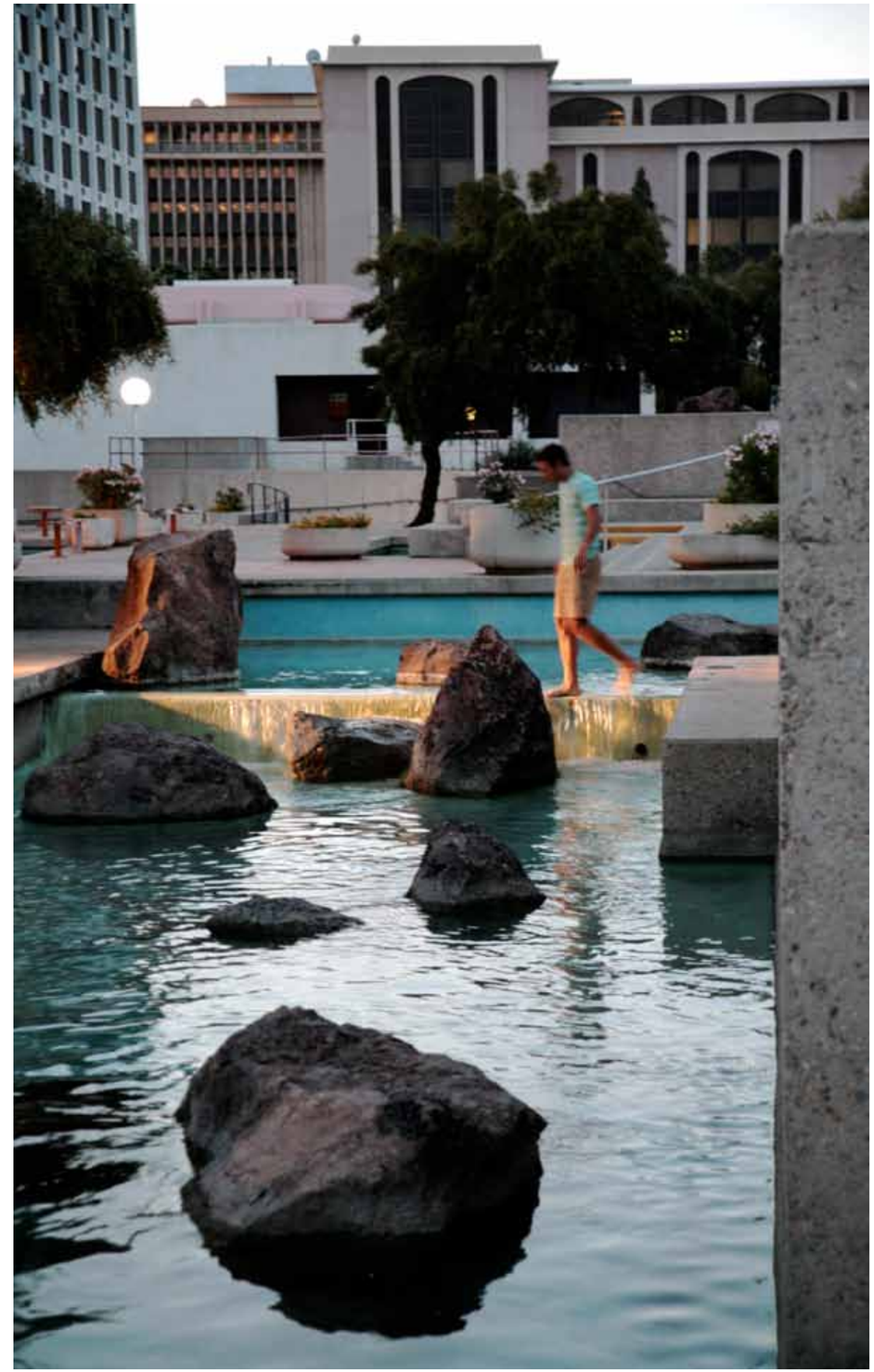

ABOVE
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OPPOSITE LEFT
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TUCSON
HISTORIC
PRESERVATION
FOUNDATION