



HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2026

ACTIVITY NUMBER: TC-COM-0226-00203
LOCATION: 255 W ALAMEDA STREET (PARCEL #11720007A)
ZONING: O-3
HISTORIC ZONE/DISTRICT: NA
APPLICANT: CITY OF TUCSON
PROJECT NAME: CITY HALL HISTORIC LANDMARK (HL) NOMINATION
STAFF CONTACT: DESIREE ARANDA, HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

BACKGROUND

The City of Tucson proposes Historic Landmark (HL) designation of Tucson City Hall, located south of W. Alameda Street and north of W. Pennington Street between El Presidio Plaza to the east and Granada Avenue to the west. The Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation prepared the original HL nomination in 2017. In 2020, THPF obtained a formal Determination of Eligibility from the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office, which found City Hall eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2025, the THPF submitted a renewed request to the City of Tucson for local HL designation. On November 5, 2025, Mayor and Council initiated HL designation of Tucson City Hall. The City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office (CHPO) prepared the enclosed inventory form and supporting materials based off the original THPF submittal and additional research and documentation. On December 11, 2025, PRS heard the nomination and continued it to a future meeting.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

Applicable preservation standards include Section 5.8.5 of the City of Tucson Unified Development Code (UDC).

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built between 1961 and 1966, Tucson City Hall at 255 W. Alameda Street is individually eligible for listing at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government for its important role in Tucson's political history as the local seat of government since 1962, and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a significant example of a twentieth century civic building designed in the brutalist architectural style by noted architectural firm, Friedman and Jobusch. The subject building is Tucson's fourth purpose-built and only remaining City Hall building. Executed in a restrained modernist style with regional desert adaptations, Tucson City Hall integrates horizontality with a commanding vertical tower, employing locally sympathetic materials and massing responsive to Tucson's desert climate. The 1961-1966 Tucson City Hall was the first new civic building

erected downtown during the urban renewal era, predating the Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project approved by voters in 1966 and which completely transformed the area through a process of widespread demolition and redevelopment.

PROPOSED HL BOUNDARIES

The boundaries of the HL overlay would match the boundaries of the parcel on which City Hall sits. The original Friedman & Jobusch design for City Hall, with a period of significance from 1961 to 1966, is located completely within the existing parcel boundaries. While surrounding parcels contribute to City Hall's setting today, they have been significantly redeveloped since the period of significance. The current design features of the parcels surrounding City Hall are not connected to the original design of City Hall and were built outside the period of significance for the proposed Historic Landmark.

SUMMARY OF CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

- Irregular plan
- 10-story height
- Horizontally oriented one-story ground floor
- Vertically oriented rectilinear nine-story tower
- Steel beam framework
- Cast concrete construction
- Cast stone facing
- Stucco fascia
- Covered walkways with scored concrete floors at the ground floor
- Ground level lobby entrances at the north and south, and ground level entrance to the Mayor and Council Chambers at the east side
- Large glass plate windows with aluminum mullions at the first floor
- Horizontally oriented ribbons of smaller windows with metal mullions, located above the cast stone concrete at the first floor exterior
- Recessed glass windows with overhangs along all sides of the tower
- Wraparound balcony at the 10th floor featuring a decorative screen of gold-anodized aluminum rings arranged in a geometric grid
- Muted desert tones
- Concrete steps with metal railings leading up to the building at north, east, and south sides
- Exposed aggregate concrete planters and retaining walls

PUBLIC/NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

The Department has not received any public comments regarding the proposed Historic Landmark designation.

ZONING & BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

This review applies only to the project's compliance with historic preservation standards. Compliance with all other applicable zoning regulations is required to rezone the property.

STAFF FINDINGS

Historic Preservation staff find that the proposed HL designation meets the requirements for designation as set forth in UDC section 5.8.5 "Standards for Establishing and Amending HLs."

REQUESTED ACTION

The Department seeks a recommendation whether to approve, approve of the conditions, or deny the proposed HL designation.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Parcel Map/Proposed HL Boundary
- B. UDC 5.8.5 Standards for Establishing and Amending HLs
- C. Procedural Flow Chart for HL Landmark Re-Zoning
- D. AZ SHPO Determination of Eligibility for City Hall
- E. AZ Historic Property Inventory Form for Tucson City Hall

225 W Alameda Street



Notes

Legend

Parcels

1: 1,200



193.8 0 96.88 193.8 Feet

WGS_1984_Web_Mercator_Auxiliary_Sphere
© City of Tucson

This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

5.8.5. STANDARDS FOR ESTABLISHING AND AMENDING HLs

A. The following standards should be considered when determining if an area shall be established as a HL or whether the boundaries of an existing HL shall be changed or dissolved.

1. A HL shall include historic sites , historic buildings, or historic structures , as defined in Section 1.4.9, *Definitions*, and which are individually listed or individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local, state, or national level of significance.

2. A HL should include a group of related sites , buildings , and structures in their original setting that contribute to an understanding of the heritage of the community.

B. Proposed HL

An area may be proposed for HL designation or amendment by any of the following:

1. The Mayor and Council;
2. The owner(s) of the proposed HL, if it is a single property, or all of the owners if more than one property; or
3. The Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee.

(Ord. 11150, 3/18/2014)

5.8.6. STEPS TO ESTABLISH OR AMEND A HL

A. Nomination Proposal

A nomination proposal for the proposed Historic Landmark is provided to the City Historic Preservation Office, the PDSD Director and the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee for review and recommendation to the Zoning Examiner. The nomination proposal shall include a map outlining the geographic boundaries of the proposed area, a summary of the historic resources in the proposed HL, and a completed National Register of Historic Places form, or National Register nomination, or a State of Arizona Historic Property Inventory Form. Multiple photographs and attached Statements of Significance and Integrity must also be attached to the nomination proposal.

Staff shall review the survey and inventory information for eligibility criteria and completeness. Staff shall accept or reject the nomination proposal within 14 days of submittal.

B. Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee

1. Public Meeting

The applicant presents the nomination proposal materials and any other evidence of historical significance and integrity in a public meeting. The Tucson-Pima County Historical Plans Review Subcommittee votes to recommend approval or denial of the nomination.

2. Recommendation

If the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission Plans Review Subcommittee votes to recommend approval of the nomination proposal, the applicant receives a letter from the PDSD Director. This letter acts as formal notification that the nomination proposal has been recommended for approval, and the applicant may proceed with the submittal of the HL rezoning application and materials.

C. Change of Zoning

The rezoning application and nomination materials are reviewed by the Zoning Examiner and considered for approval in accordance with Section 3.5 *Rezoning (Change of Zoning)* and must comply with all rezoning steps. The Zoning Examiner recommendation shall include findings verifying designation eligibility and any land use impacts of the proposed HL. The Zoning Examiner's recommendations regarding land use impacts are for consideration by the Mayor and Council but are to be presented separately from findings regarding the HL eligibility, and are not intended to place special rezoning conditions on the proposed HL. The Zoning Examiner's recommendations are forwarded to the Mayor and Council. The Mayor and Council decision on the change of zoning may include the designation of buildings, structures, or sites as Contributing, Non-Contributing or Intrusive, and the designation of a HL.

D. Additional Requirements for HLs

1. Design Standards

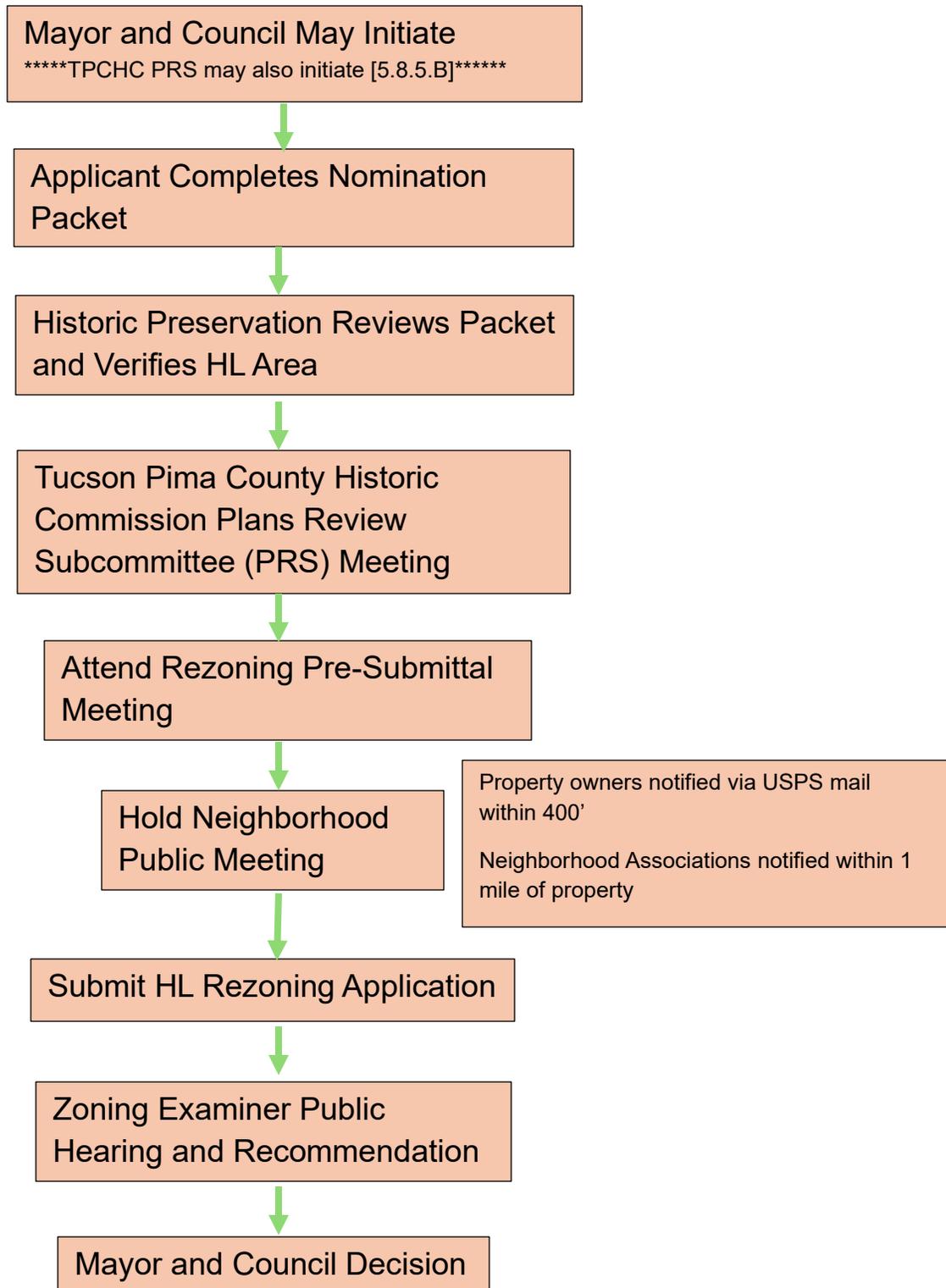
Refer to Section 5.8.9 for HL Design Standards. Consultation with the City Historic Preservation Office may be necessary in special cases.

E. Dissolution of a HL

Dissolution of a HL is reviewed and considered for approval in accordance with Section 3.5, *Rezoning (Change of Zoning)*.

(Ord. 11150, 3/18/2014; Am. Ord. 11411, 11/22/2016)

City of Tucson Historic Landmark Zoning Flow Chart





Doug Ducey
Governor

ARIZONA STATE PARKS & TRAILS

Robert Broscheid
Executive Director



December 3, 2020

Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation
Attn: Demion Clinco
PO Box 40008
Tucson, AZ 85717

**RE: Tucson City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St., Tucson
Determination of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places**

Dear Mr. Clinco,

In response to your request, staff of the State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed the information you provided about Tucson City Hall for its eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. Staff recommends that the property is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the area of significance of Politics/Government and also Criterion C in the area of significance of Architecture. The property is recommended eligible at the local level of significance. State Historic Preservation Officer Kathryn Leonard concurred with this recommendation on December 3, 2020.

If you have any questions or requests, you may contact me by email at wcollins@azstateparks.gov.

Sincerely,

William S. Collins, Ph.D.
State Historic Preservation Office
Arizona State Parks & Trails

cc: Jodie Brown, City of Tucson Historic Preservation Officer

STATE OF ARIZONA

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM

Please type or print clearly. Fill out each applicable space accurately and with as much information as is known about the property. Use continuation sheets where necessary. Send completed form to: State Historic Preservation Office, 1110 West Washington Street, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85007

PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

For properties identified through survey: Site No: _____ Survey Area: _____

Historic Name(s): Tucson City Hall
(Enter the name(s), if any, that best reflects the property's historic importance.)

Address: 255 West Alameda Street

City or Town: Tucson vicinity County: Pima Tax Parcel No. 117-20-007A

Township: 14S Range: 13E Section: 12 Quarter Section: SW Acreage: 1.55

Plat (Addition): Pueblo Center Block: 503 Lot(s): Part of 2 & Part of 3
Year of plat (addition): Oct. 9, 1969

Latitude: 32.2226 Longitude: -110.9748 USGS 7.5' quad map: Tucson

Style: brutalist/modernist

Architect: Friedman & Jobusch not determined known (source: plans, newspapers)

Builder: Ashton Company, Inc. not determined known (source: newspapers)

Construction Date: 1961-1966 known estimated (source: plans, newspapers)

STRUCTURAL CONDITION

Good (well maintained, no serious problems apparent)

Fair (some problems apparent) Describe: _____

Poor (major problems; imminent threat) Describe: _____

Ruin/Uninhabitable

USES/FUNCTIONS

Describe how the property has been used over time, beginning with the original use.

Purpose-built City Hall used continuously by local government
Sources: City records, newspapers

PHOTO INFORMATION

Date of photo: December 4, 2025
View Direction (looking towards): South



SIGNIFICANCE

To be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, a property must represent an important part of the history or architecture of an area. Note: a property need only be significant under one of the areas below to be eligible for the National Register.

- A. HISTORIC EVENTS/TRENDS (On a continuation sheet describe how the property is associated either with a significant historic event, or with a trend or pattern of events important to the history of the nation, the state, or a local community.)
- B. PERSON (On a continuation sheet describe how the property is associated with the life of a person significant in the past.)
- C. ARCHITECTURE (On a continuation sheet describe how the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.)

Outbuildings: (Describe any other buildings or structures on the property and whether they may be considered historic.) NA

INTEGRITY

To be eligible for the National Register, a property must have integrity, that is, it must be able to visually convey its importance. Provide detailed information below about the property's integrity. Use continuation sheets if necessary.

1. LOCATION Original Site Moved (date N/A) Original Site: _____
2. DESIGN (Describe alterations from the original design, including dates—known or estimated—when alterations were made) The building retains its original brutalist architectural vocabulary from construction, including its character-defining cast concrete construction, cast stone facing, stucco fascia, use of large glass plate windows with aluminum mullions, recessed fenestration with overhangs, and its wraparound balcony at the 10th floor featuring a decorative screen of gold-anodized aluminum rings arranged in a geometric grid. Of note at the interior is its entry lobby, first floor council chambers, and 10th floor, all of which retain their original design.
3. SETTING (Describe the natural and/or built environment around the property) Tucson City Hall is located within a civic complex in downtown Tucson and is adjacent to several intact mid-twentieth century buildings and resources including the Phoenix Title Building/TransAmerica Building (1964, Thomas E Stanley & Associates), Pima County Administration Complex and Superior Court (1966, Terry Atkinson and Place & Place architects), El Presidio Park (1971, Michael Lugo, Jr. for Blanton and Co), Tucson Community Center (1971-74, Cain Nelson Ware & Cook, Friedman & Jobusch, Garrett Eckbo), Tucson Museum of Art (1972-1974, William Wilde Associates), and the U.S. Federal Building (1974, Cain Nelson Ware & Cook).

Describe how the setting has changed since the property's period of significance: Tucson City Hall was completed in 1966, the same year the Tucson Urban renewal Area/Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project was adopted. Urban renewal dramatically transformed downtown Tucson between the late 1960s through the 1970s. City Hall represented the first of many civic buildings constructed in the area during this period. The underground parking garage beneath El Presidio Plaza, east of City Hall, was also completed in 1966. A significant portion of nearby Meyer Avenue was demolished in the late 1960s to make way for the new civic buildings. El Presidio Plaza and its central fountain, located east of the new 1966 City Hall, was completed in 1971 but the area's use as a civic plaza dates to 1775. It retains its original outdoor open space. The 1916 Tucson City Hall, which sat adjacent to the new City Hall, continued to be used as office space until it was torn down in 1972; it was replaced with open space and parking. Tucson City Hall is located within the original boundaries of the former Presidio San Agustin del Tucson. A recreation of the southwest portion of the Tucson Presidio wall sits to the west of the building. While the immediate setting of the 1966 City Hall has changed since the time of construction, the building retains feeling and association with its role as the seat of local government since 1962, and with its modernist architecture dating to 1961 to 1966. It represented the first of many changes in the built environment of downtown Tucson during urban renewal.

4. MATERIALS (Describe the materials used in the following elements of the property)

Walls (structure): Steel beams/framework Foundation: Slab Roof: flat

Windows: Glass window wall systems w/ metal frame (first floor), recessed glass windows with overhangs
If the windows have been altered, what were they originally? _____

Wall Sheathing: Cast Concrete

If the sheathing has been altered, what was it originally? _____

5. WORKMANSHIP (Describe the distinctive elements, if any, of craftsmanship or method of construction)

Cast concrete and anodized metal and copper

NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS (if listed, check the appropriate box)

Individually listed; Contributor Noncontributor to _____ Historic District

Date Listed: _____ Determined eligible by Keeper of National Register (date: _____)

RECOMMENDATIONS OF ELIGIBILITY (opinion of SHPO staff or survey consultant)

Property is is not eligible individually.

Property is is not eligible as a contributor to a potential historic district.

More information needed to evaluate.

If not considered eligible, state reason: _____

FORM COMPLETED BY:

Name and Affiliation: Demion Clinco (Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation), Desiree Aranda and Jason Lilienthal (City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office)

Date: 2/26/2026 Mailing Address: 201 S. Stone Ave. Tucson, AZ Phone No.: (520) 837-4938

STATE OF ARIZONA

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM
CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property Tucson City Hall

Continuation Sheet No. 1

SIGNIFICANCE

Overview

Built between 1961 and 1966, Tucson City Hall at 255 W. Alameda Street is individually eligible for listing at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government for its important role in Tucson's political history as the local seat of government since 1962, and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a significant example of a twentieth century civic building designed in the brutalist architectural style by noted architectural firm, Friedman and Jobusch. The subject building is Tucson's fourth purpose-built, and only remaining, City Hall building. Executed in a restrained modernist style with regional desert adaptations, Tucson City Hall integrates horizontality with a commanding vertical tower, employing locally sympathetic materials and massing responsive to Tucson's desert climate. The 1961-1966 Tucson City Hall was the first new civic building erected downtown during the urban renewal era, predating the Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project approved by voters in 1966 and which completely transformed the area through a process of widespread demolition and redevelopment.

Brief History of Tucson City Hall Buildings

Tucson was incorporated on February 7, 1877, and became a charter city on March 7, 1883. Local government operated out of several different buildings since that time. Some consider the Congress Hall Saloon, an 1868 adobe building on Meyer Street between Congress (formerly Calle de la Alegria) and Pennington streets, to be Tucson's first, albeit unofficial, city hall. Owned by Charles O. Brown, Congress Hall Saloon was the site of organizing related to the Arizona Territorial Legislature and the formation of Tucson as a municipality. Congress Hall Saloon is where Tucson's first city council members, including Brown, were elected. The saloon was eventually demolished in 1912.¹

The first purpose-built City Hall was erected either in 1871 or 1881, according to different accounts. It had a distinctive almost triangular tower form, capped with a belfry and fire bell. Built of frame construction, it was two stories and contained three rooms. The building served as Tucson's first City Hall, first fire alarm system, and first telephone exchange. After City services moved elsewhere, Judge T.D. Satterwhite purchased the tower and relocated it to Granada Street where it became a playhouse for his children. The building was sold again to Percy Rider and eventually burned down in a fire on May 11, 1934.²

The second purpose-built Tucson City Hall, completed in 1883, was located at 100 N Court Avenue where the 1929 Pima County Courthouse sits today. The building had two stories - City administration occupied the adobe built first floor and the City's first public library operated out of the wood frame second floor. The building served as City Hall until 1916 and was eventually demolished in 1929 to make room for the new courthouse.³

¹ "State Capitol an Old Adobe; Raging Santa Cruz Before Floods Cut Deep Channel" (Tucson Citizen, September 30, 1915), 5; "Congress St. Name Honors Saloon-Not Legislative Branch of Government" (Arizona Daily Star, July 10, 2012), A010.

² "First City Hall Threatened By Fire, But Is Undamaged" (Tucson Daily Citizen, July 22, 1929), 1; "Old City Hall, Famous Tower, Lost in Blaze" (Arizona Daily Star, May 12, 1934), 1.

³ "First City Hall Threatened By Fire, But is Undamaged" (Tucson Citizen, July 22, 1929), 1.

STATE OF ARIZONA

**HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM
CONTINUATION SHEET**

name of property Tucson City Hall

Continuation Sheet No. 2

As Tucson continued to grow, so did local government to meet the needs of its growing population. By 1916, the third purpose-built City Hall building was erected at 69 N Meyer Avenue and Ott Street, replacing an old Presbyterian Church that dated to the early 1800s. The new City Hall also housed the local jail. Designed in the Neoclassical style, the 1916 City Hall had a rectangular layout with centralized entry way, Doric columns with Ionic capitals, a parapet of masonry blocks with an hourglass shaped balustrade, and stone clad veneer. This building served as the seat of local government until 1962 when offices moved to the current City Hall building at 255 W. Alameda Street. The 1916 City Hall was eventually demolished in 1972. In its place went open space and street parking for the newest City Hall completed in 1966.



Fig. 1. The first purpose-built Tucson City Hall built c. 1871-1881 and destroyed in fire in 1934. This photo was taken after the building was relocated to a new location. (Arizona State Library Archives and Public Records, History and Archives Division).



Fig. 2. The second purpose-built Tucson City Hall was constructed in 1883 and demolished in 1929. It was located at the northeast corner of North Court Avenue and Library Street, which no longer exists (Arizona Historical Society, Henry and Albert Buehman Memorial Collection, BD-36).



Fig. 3. The third purpose-built Tucson City Hall was constructed in 1916. Photo from 1930. It was demolished in 1972 (Arizona State Library Archives and Public Records, History and Archives Division).

STATE OF ARIZONA

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM
CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property Tucson City Hall

Continuation Sheet No. 3

Tucson City Hall (1961-1966)

Tucson experienced a high rate of growth in both industries and population following WWII, and city government reached capacity within the 1916 City Hall. Yet, the 1916 City Hall faced longtime problems since its construction, and, as then City Manager Ruben Suarez was quoted by the Arizona Daily Star, “by 1950, the city bureaucracy had outgrown the building, and former downtown hotel and homes were converted into office space.”⁴ Serious discussion regarding City Hall improvements began in 1957 when Mayor Hummel announced a \$41 million bond program of which \$2.3 million would be earmarked for expansion of the existing 1916 City Hall building.⁵ Multiple design approaches were contemplated but eventually a pared down bond issue was taken to the voters in August of 1958 and passed.⁶ In February 1959, Mayor and Council hired the firm of Friedman and Jobusch to draw “designs for an extensive expansion of City Hall.”⁷ In 1960, Friedman and Jobusch provided an early conceptual plan of a City Hall complex (as seen in Fig. 4 below).

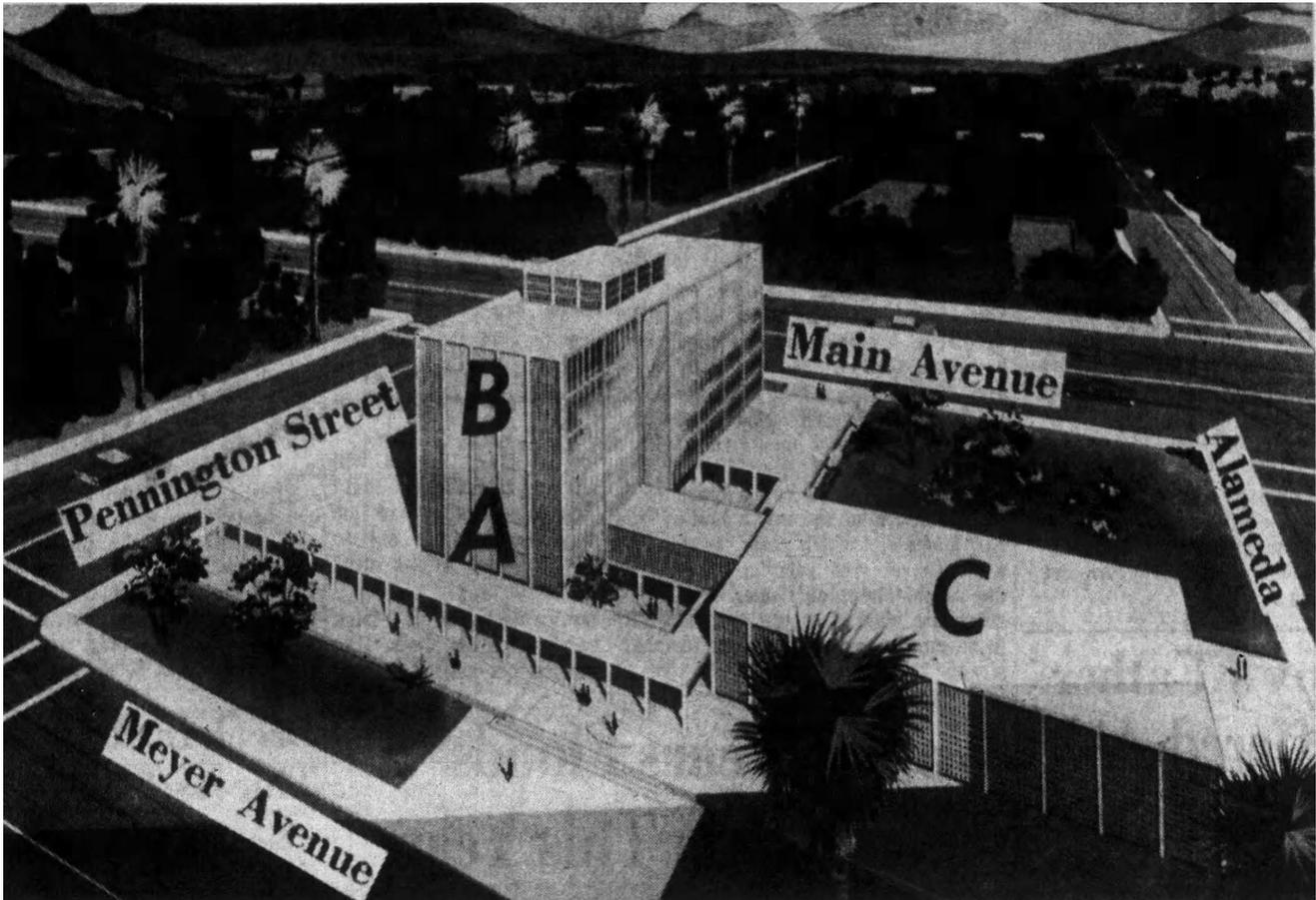


Fig. 4. Tucson City Hall conceptual rendering by Friedman and Jobusch, May 1960.

⁴ “Old City Hall Memories: ‘It stunk’” (Arizona Daily Star, July 6, 1999), 9.

⁵ Fritz Kessinger, “City Bond Goal is \$41.6 Million” (Tucson Citizen, May 31, 1957), 1.

⁶ “Election Results Please Mayors Elsewhere, Too” (Arizona Daily Star, Aug 9, 1958), 11.

⁷ “East Side Mains Expedited City Pushes Other Projects” (Tucson Daily Citizen, Feb 16, 1959), 31.

STATE OF ARIZONA

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM
CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property Tucson City Hall Continuation Sheet No. 4

A 1960 article in the Tucson Citizen described the planned four-phase program for the expanded City Hall:

A new two-story wing, to be constructed south of the present city hall [...] The initial phase construction which will more than double the space of the present building should be completed in 15 months. [...] The project will entail tearing down the north half of the present engineering and public works building to make room. The new wing will be constructed across a discontinued portion of Ott Street. It will have a partially unfinished basement, along with two floors of office space. The basement will be completed in the second phase. Once the first phase expansion is completed, the old Parkview Hotel, on the opposite corner from the present city hall will be torn down to make room for a parking lot. [...] Money for the initial phase was approved in the city bond vote in the summer of 1958. The bonds that will pay for the construction have not yet been sold but will be put on the market this summer. The rest of the expansion will come in two additional phases to be supported by the long-range bond program. A second phase of the capital improvement bond program will be presented [to] the public sometime in the next year and will contain a package for the second portion of the expansion planned.

Phase 1 is the new two-story wing. It will contain 27,300 feet of work space.

Phase 2 called for adding three additional floors to this building, making it five stories high, increasing usable space in the basement and expanding the main floor.

Phase 3 will be the building of a separate police and court building on the northwest corner of Meyer Ave. and Alameda St., across the street from the present city hall.

The last phase is to replace the present building - built in 1916 with a modern two-story structure.⁸

Seven bids were received for phase one of the project. The Ashton Company made the lowest bid at \$722,600.⁹ The building permit was issued on February 3, 1961, and construction began in April that same year.¹⁰ The first phase rectilinear building required 110 tons of structural steel. Fabrication was contracted to the local Tucson firm, Kasper-Hall Steel Corp. In December 1961, Mayor Don Hummel, as one of his last acts in office, dedicated the near finished City Hall. At the dedication, the outgoing Mayor declared, "a new building to Tucson, the Old Pueblo, which should signify a new Tucson and a revised interest by the people in government".¹¹ Construction of the first phase single-story with basement was completed on January 10, 1962 and occupied soon after.¹²

⁸ Peter Starrett, "Plans to Expand City Hall Unveiled" (Tucson Citizen, May 24, 1960), 1.

⁹ Don Carson, "City Hall Bids Above Estimates" (Arizona Daily Star, Dec. 29, 1960), 11.

¹⁰ Permit Application, City of Tucson microfiche film TD# 1-77-00 Docs v1, pp. 36-44.

¹¹ "Mayor Dedicates New City Hall" (Arizona Daily Star, December 4, 1961), 1.

¹² "1st Stage City Hall Project Nears End" (Tucson Citizen, January 12, 1962), 5.

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HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM
CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property Tucson City Hall

Continuation Sheet No. 5



Fig. 5. The first phase of Tucson City Hall was a one-story building with finished basement, c. 1962. The old 1916 City Hall building sat to its north until 1972. Photograph is augmented to show building locations (Arizona Historical Society, PC 200 Smith Photographs 1967, Box 1 of 4).

STATE OF ARIZONA

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property Tucson City Hall

Continuation Sheet No. 6

The number of stories planned to top the original single-story City Hall fluctuated between five to 11 stories. In December 1964, noted civic leader, Roy Drachman, chaired the Citizens Advisory Committee on Community Improvements and began the process of making a formal recommendation to the City Council for the \$2.1 million City Hall tower to be included in a bond package.¹³ In 1965, it was decided that a tower addition to City Hall would total nine stories.¹⁴

A city bond election to fund the completion of the tower was held and passed on June 1, 1965. The Mayor and Council again contracted with Friedman & Jobusch to design the nine-story tower addition for a fee of \$80,000 with design work to be completed in 180 days.¹⁵ Mayor and Council approved the design that September. The council also approved an expansion plan for a second, 18-story tower to accommodate Tucson's "tremendous and staggering" growth, as architect Bernard Friedman noted, but it was never built due to a lack of funding.¹⁶

The five years between the original 1960 design concept and the approved 1966 version of the tower addition represented a shift in architectural language. A Tucson Citizen article reported on the efforts of the Tucson Heritage Foundation to influence the design of the tower to be more "Southwestern":

When first done five years ago it was to be a simple glass curtain wall affair. The latest renderings shown by him [Friedman] are considerably different. Sculptured colonnades run the height of the building, providing deep recesses which will display varied plays of light and shadow. A heavy balcony and iron grillwork run around the top floor. Copper colored spandrels are to be inserted at every floor in the space between the columns. The first floor of the new city hall, already built, would also be changed by modifying the shape of columns around it. Wrought iron railing and lamps would be added.¹⁷

City Council approved the final plans for the City Hall addition on April 11, 1966.¹⁸ Ashton Construction Co., the lowest bidder on the project, at a cost of \$1.8 million, was selected as the contractor. Construction was scheduled to begin within two weeks of the announcement.¹⁹ As part of the project, first floor offices were converted into the Council Chambers and public hearing room.

On October 23, 1967, Mayor Lew Davis dedicated the completed City Hall Tower (Fig. 8, 9, 10). Two hundred individuals attended the ceremony including the Tucson High School band and color guard from Salpointe High School POTC. Rabbi Albert T. Bilgray of Temple Emanu-El gave an invocation and Bishop Francis J. Green blessed the building. Mayor Davis said, "This magnificent edifice is a symbol of the desire of the people of Tucson to make this a great city [...] in this structure there is far more than steel, cement and glass - it represents all who worked to make it come true."²⁰

¹³ "Capital Improvement Set, Study" (Arizona Daily Star, December 2, 1964), 11.

¹⁴ "Council To Approve New Tower Plans" (Tucson Daily Citizen, September 3, 1965).

¹⁵ "Design Contract Given to Friedman & Jobusch" (Tucson Daily Citizen, July 7, 1965), 2.

¹⁶ "Addition To City Hall Will Allow For Future Annex Of 18 Stories" (Arizona Daily Star, September 14, 1965), 9.

¹⁷ "Architectural Heritage Can Be Preserved" (Tucson Citizen, Feb 15, 1966), 1.

¹⁸ "Plans for City Hall Tower Get Final OK" (Tucson Citizen, Apr 12, 1966), 9.

¹⁹ "Ashton Firm Bids Low on City Tower" (Arizona Daily Star, Jun 2, 1966), 21.

²⁰ Don Robinson, "Officials Hail City Hall Tower" (Arizona Daily Star, Oct 24, 1967), 17.

STATE OF ARIZONA

HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM
CONTINUATION SHEET

name of property Tucson City Hall

Continuation Sheet No. 7



Fig. 6. Friedman and Jobusch architectural illustration from May 1965 showing a conceptual rendering for Tucson City Hall. The final design was pared down (THPF Archive).

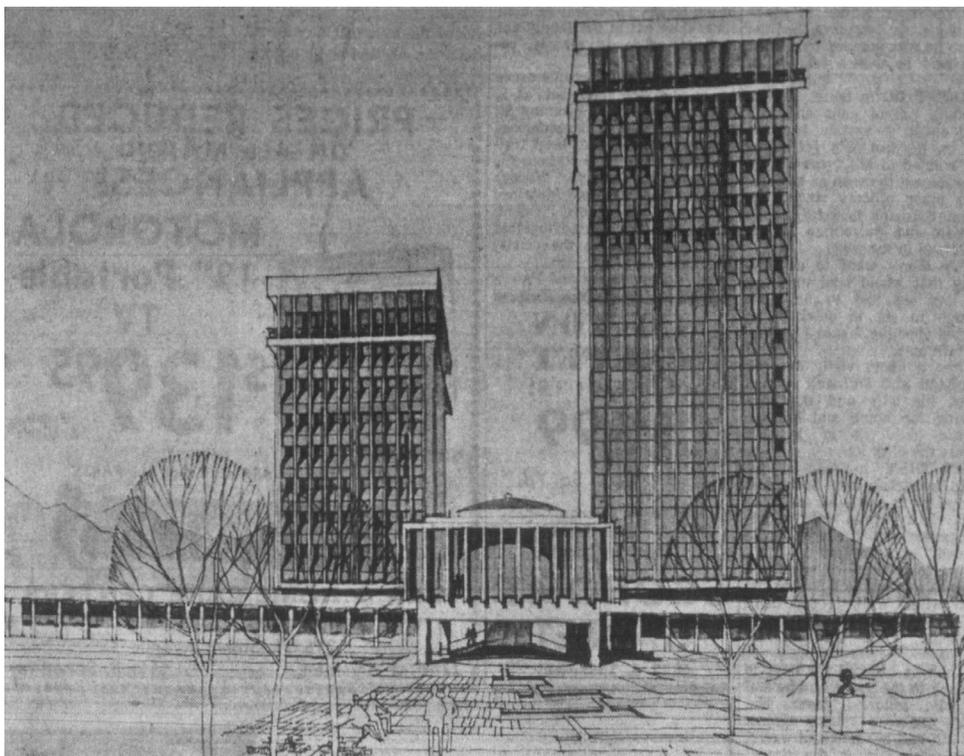


Fig. 7. Friedman and Jobusch architectural illustration from September 1965 showing conceptual rendering of Tucson City Hall. The planned second tower that was never built (THPF Archive).

STATE OF ARIZONA

**HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM
CONTINUATION SHEET**

name of property Tucson City Hall

Continuation Sheet No. 8

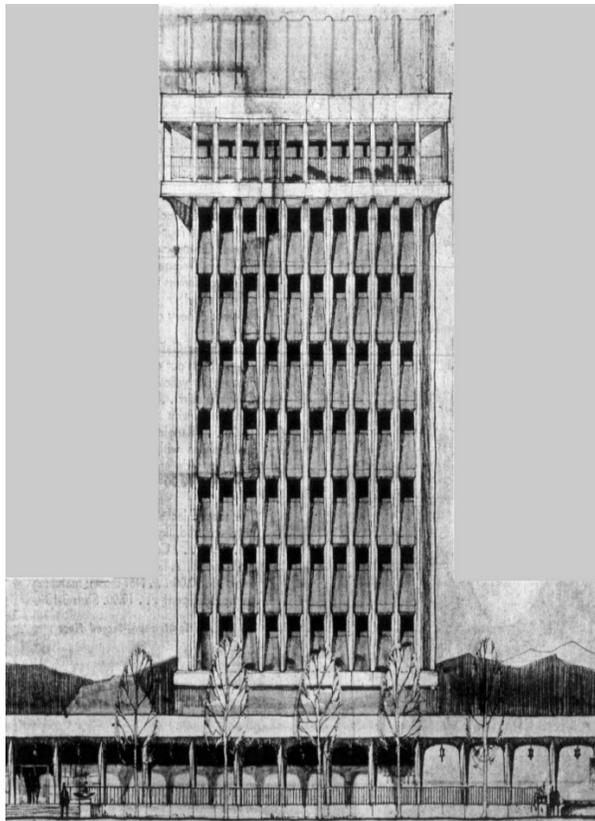


Fig. 8. Friedman and Jobusch architectural illustration from February 1966 depicting a conceptual rendering of a 10-story Tucson City Hall (THPF Archive).



Fig 9. Friedman and Jobusch architectural design illustration, 1966 (THPF Archive).

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Fig 10. City Hall tower under construction, 1966 (Arizona Historical Society, PC 200 Smith Photographs 1967, Box 1 of 4).

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—Citizen Photo by Bill Hopkins

Newcomer To Downtown

Workmen of the Ashton Co. were completing steel framework today on the 10th and top story of the \$2 million addition to the new city hall. This view, from the Transamerica Building (formerly Phoenix Title Building) shows the old city hall building and A Mountain in the background.

Fig. 11. Tucson Citizen article shows construction of the new Tucson City Hall in 1966. The old 1916 City Hall (demolished 1972) is in the foreground (“Newcomer to Downtown,” Tucson Citizen, September 27, 1966).

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Fig. 12. The completed Tucson City Hall in 1966, west facade (Photo by Bill Sears, THPF Archive).

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Fig. 13. Tucson City Hall, east and south facades, 1968 (Photo by Gene Magee Arizona, Historical Society, PC 177, f.25).

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Fig. 14. Tucson City Hall in 1966, south and east facade, nocturnal lighting plan (Photo by Bill Sears, THPF Archive).



Fig. 15. Tucson City Hall in 1966, north and east facades (Photo by Bill Sears, THPF Archive).

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The interior of the building was featured in the Arizona Daily Star Home and Building Section on February 18, 1968. Don Robinson, writing for the Arizona Daily Star, noted:

Tucson's sparkling new 10 story city hall tower is an example of efficiency and dignity in modern government. [...] An ultra-modern council chamber for public meetings that can seat 200 persons as compared with 85 in the old chamber takes up about one fifth of the first floor. Conference rooms scattered throughout the building enable departmental meetings to be held on a few minutes notice. [...] Top echelon offices - those of the mayor, council members, the city manager and his staff - are in a gold carpeted, walnut paneled section of the 10th floor. They are equipped with contemporary modern walnut desks. Office chairs as well as those for visitors by orange and red upholstery. [...] An outstanding feature of the building designed by Friedman & Jobusch Architects and Engineers is its flexibility. All partitions are easily shifted permitting offices to be enlarged or divided into smaller offices. The floors are all designed on a five-foot modular basis with each section containing units of air-conditioning and lighting that are easily changed around. [...] The building contains 60,000 square feet of floor space or the equivalent of about 40 average homes. [...] The council chamber on the first floor is probably the most eye-catching part of the building. With contoured walls and ceiling and indirect lighting the room has a sound system that includes individual microphones for the councilman and city staff members at the podium. [...] A glassed-in press room with adjoining balcony for television cameras is located in the rear of the chambers. A 14 by 29 foot conference room with a long table that seats 16 persons is just off the chambers. Here the mayor and council hold executive sessions.²¹



Fig. 16. Tucson City Hall in 1966, council chambers (Photo by Bill Sears, THPF Archive).

²¹ Don Robinson, "Tucson's New City Hall Designed For Efficiency" (Arizona Daily Star, Feb 18, 1968), 22.

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Fig. 17. Tucson City Hall, 1966, Mayor's Office (Photo by Bill Sears, THPF Archive).



Fig. 18. Tucson City Hall, 1966, 10th Floor terrace and screen detail (Photo by Bill Sears, THPF Archive).

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By 1972, City offices had vacated the old 1916 City Hall. One observer noted, “the quaint old City Hall, with its Ionic columns, began looking like a Grecian Ruin.”²² The 1916 City Hall was razed in 1972 and in its place went a small park and vehicular street parking. A 1936-era monument to Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino still sits at the northwest corner of the park.²³ During an interview with the Arizona Daily Star in 1999, a former employee who worked at the 1916 City Hall reflected on the urban renewal period in downtown Tucson:

The old City Hall was declared obsolete at a time when Tucson focused on renewing the downtown area, razing barrios and historic buildings to make way for the new convention center and other government buildings... Nobody fought for the old stuff. It was not a time when Tucsonans valued historical buildings as they do today.²⁴

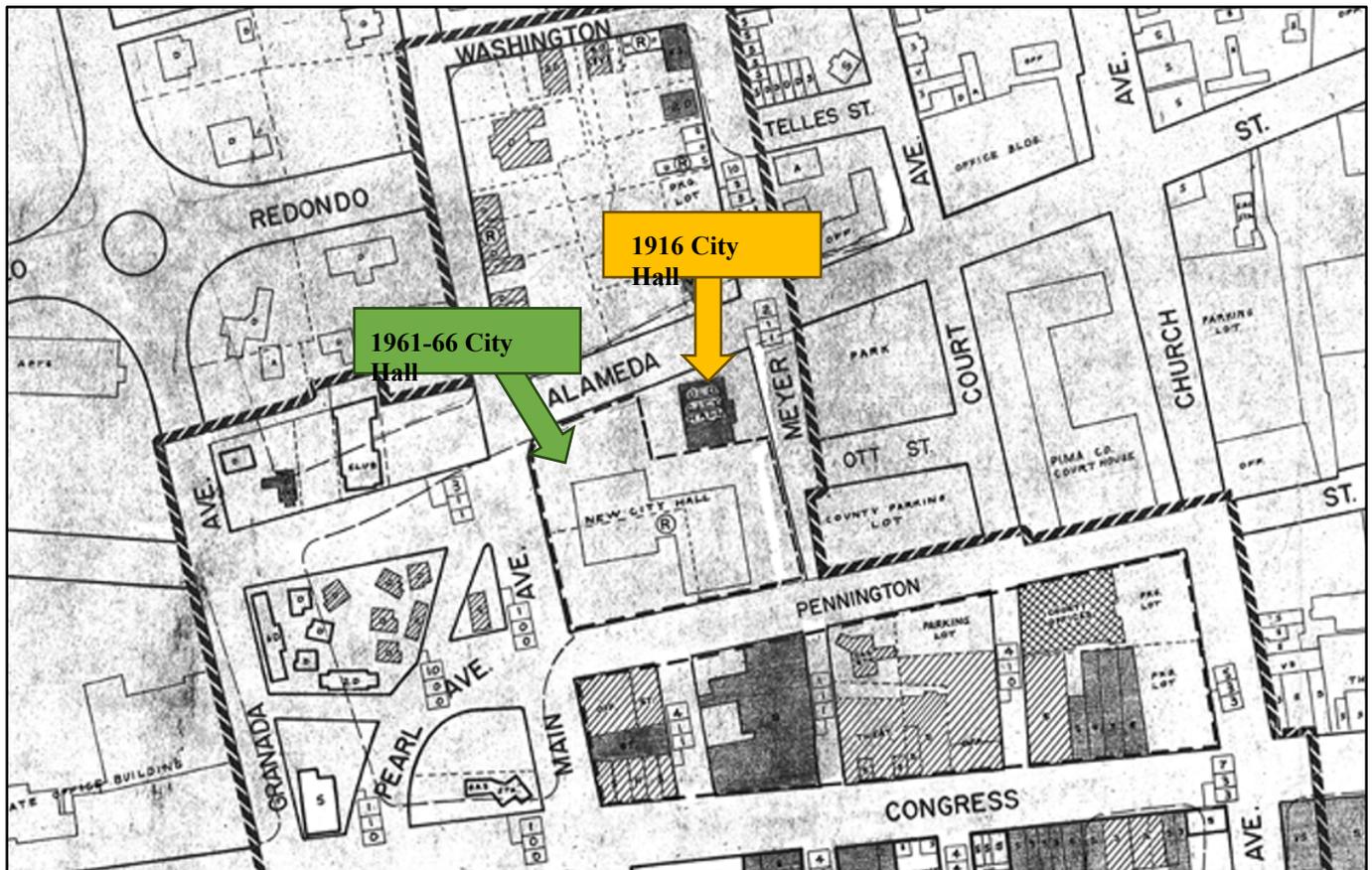


Fig. 19. Detail of a Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project map (image was augmented to show the locations of the old and new City Hall buildings). The original redevelopment map shows the 1916 City Hall identified for removal, as indicated by its deeper shade.

(Plan number W-68-005J, Maps and Records, Department of Transportation, City of Tucson. “Development Urban renewal, Demolition, Existing Land Use & Building Conditions Map, Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project, City of Tucson, Pima County, Arizona.” 1968).

²² “Old City Hall Crumbles..” (Arizona Daily Star, November 2, 1972), 39.

²³ Permit application, City of Tucson microfiche film, TD# 2-77-00 Docs 5 v1, pp. 9 and 18-25.

²⁴ Ibid.

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The City of Tucson continued to redevelop the area surrounding the 1961-1966 City Hall through the mid-1970s. Like City Hall, the Pima County Administration Complex and Superior Court were also completed in 1966. That same year, voters passed the Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project, which resulted in the large-scale demolition of an 80-acre area known as La Calle, consisting of predominately Mexican American barrios and working-class neighborhoods where many of Tucson’s African American and Asian American residents also lived. The area encompassed a vibrant commercial district and cultural hub of businesses, churches, plazas, parks, theaters, and restaurants.²⁵ Begun in 1967, the Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project resulted in “the displacement of 735 individuals including 118 homeowners, 142 families, and 105 businesses through the seizure and demolition of 263 buildings.”²⁶

The Tucson Community Center (TCC), built between 1971 and 1974, replaced La Calle. The TCC included a new modernist convention center, civic buildings, hotel, landscape areas, fountains, and parking lots.²⁷ Meyer Avenue, which once ran in front of the 1916 City Hall, was closed off and incorporated into the larger El Presidio Plaza, developed in its current form between 1970 and 1971 and which sits east of the 1961-1966 City Hall. Two other nearby modernist buildings, the Tucson Museum of Art and the U.S. Federal Building, were completed in 1974.

Architects of the Modern Movement in Tucson, 1945 - 1975

Sarah Allaback’s 2003 Essays on Modern Architecture produced for the National Park Service provide a context for evaluating architectural significance of the Modern Movement. Allaback’s introductory essay is excerpted:

American architects began to experiment with styles beyond the traditional neoclassical in the early nineteenth century. Styles were chosen for their historical associations and the buildings were considered architecturally pure versions of the past. By the end of the century, architects felt free to combine styles in an “eclectic” manner, without such concern for stylistic origins. New technologies and building materials encouraged this emerging experimentation. If this was all modern, however, it was certainly not “modernism.” When European modernism arrived in the United States in the 1920s no one could mistake it for anything that went before. Historians quickly labeled this early phase of modern architecture the International Style. It was short-lived. The white, geometric forms were too bleak for Americans, especially since they came without the social meaning of their European counterparts.

The International Style was imported to the United States, but its early development was not without American influence. As European architects began experimenting in wild new forms of architecture, materials and forms, they studied the designs of Frank Lloyd Wright, whose work had been published in portfolios by 1910. Nothing Wright designed remotely resembled the sleek European buildings, but none could deny that his work was both modern and impossible to ignore. [...] different forms of modern architecture with very different sensibilities were able to develop side by side in America. Frank Lloyd Wright and his Prairie School influenced all American architects, even immigrants like Richard Neutra and Walter Gropius.

²⁵ Lydia Otero, *La Calle* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 2, 28-29.

²⁶ Langston Emerson Guettinger (Logan Simpson) and Cannon Daughtrey (Pima County Office of Conservation and Sustainability), edited by Jennifer Levstik (Logan Simpson), Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for El Presidio Fountain (January 2021), 48.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 47.

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By the 1950s, modern architecture had been popularized to the point where it lost its shocking newness. The developers of Levittowns and other postwar subdivisions introduced popular versions of “the modern home.” While middle-class Americans enjoyed the luxury of picture windows, carports and split-levels, the architectural profession moved beyond what most people would consider domestic space. Philip Johnson’s famous Glass House was the architectural equivalent of the artist framing a blank canvas. Once everything had been removed but glass, leaving the essence of a building, there was no place left to go. Postmodernism developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a rejection of the blankness of modernism. It was all about adding layers of meaning, however artificial. Although refreshing at the time, this self-conscious style could not sustain itself. Architects of the twenty-first century are designing modern architecture that is colored by its own modernistic past. And, according to architectural histories, that past has already stood the test of time. [...] roughly from the late 1920s to the early 1960s. Whether or not we appreciate these buildings, they represent a key moment in our history, a time when all historical reference was thrown aside in favor of something new and unexplored. From our perspective, the explosion of modern architecture is dulled by familiarity. But in the 1920s a line was crossed that we can barely comprehend. Buildings went from being cultural books--their stories revealed in symbols and inscriptions rich in historical meaning--to being mute wonders of technology suggesting infinite possibility. The architectural historian and critic John Jacobus, Jr., reminds us that “nearly every present day architect, whatever his station or real sentiment, at least professes allegiance to the outward materialistic manifestations of the creative revolution that took place with the International Style.”

Modern buildings exemplify the search for the limits of building and design, the exploration of new interpretations of what is comfortable, and the effort to maximize human potential through building.²⁸

In the Pre-WWII era, the built environment of Tucson and Southern Arizona was defined by a host of revival architectural styles that promoted the region’s romantic southwestern roots. In the late nineteenth and early twenty century, architect Henry Trost moved to Tucson from Chicago, having worked in the office of Louis Sullivan. His architectural expression blended the Chicago school with Regionalism, and shaped the growing cities of Arizona, including Tucson, Bisbee, and Douglas, before moving to El Paso, Texas. His architecture was an early manifestation of American modernism pioneered by Sullivan. Not until the interwar years would Tucson-based architects Richard Morse and Arthur T. Brown begin experimenting with European ideas of modern architecture. Morse’s Forest Lodge (1935) designed for Margaret Howard, Countess of Suffolk, and Berkshire was directly inspired by his time in Europe looking at modern architectural design pioneered by the Bauhaus.

Like many cities after WWII, Tucson was growing rapidly. In 1940, the population was 35,000. By 1960, it had soared to 212,000. This population boom translated to significant housing development and the outward expansion from the urban core. A new cohort of young architects and architectural designers began to shape the city. Numerous subtypes of architectural expression emerged within Tucson’s Modern Movement. The subject of this nomination falls into the category of brutalism. Arthur Drexler’s 1979 essay for the New York Museum of Modern Art “Transformation in Modern Architecture” explored the development of the subtype:

²⁸ Sarah Allaback, *Essays on Modern Architecture* (National Park Service, 2003).

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Two architectural aesthetics vied for approval at the beginning of the sixties. One, derived from the work of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, was concerned almost exclusively with steel and glass; it came to be widely used for high-rise buildings and other commercial work. The other derived from Le Corbusier's massively sculptural buildings in rough concrete (béton brut). This post-World War II mode was often used for institutional and governmental work, perhaps because such buildings easily dominate their surroundings. The two modes were often mixed, as they still are, and the manner of mixing them constitutes a large part of architectural history during the last 20 years.

However, it is the undiluted sculptural mode that best embodies what came to be called Brutalism, notwithstanding the initial association of that term with the deliberately crude use of steel.[...]. Their aesthetic began as engineering, modified by Cubism and other modern movements in painting and sculpture. What distinguishes them from comparable work of the twenties, besides a greater restlessness of composition, is chiefly coarse materials and finishes; the change in scale (they are often very big); and the change in purpose: they are schools, museums, theaters, shopping centers, and housing—not one is a factory, a grain silo, or a hydroelectric plant.

Their architects have transformed a utilitarian aesthetic with sculptural inventions, mostly designed for aggressive effects of mass and weight. There is a limit to the number of ways interesting sculptural events can be generated. Structure alone seldom requires bulk, but columns can be disguised or enlarged to make powerful vertical masses. Utility shafts are even better for this purpose, and can be topped by boxes or hoodlike projections. Interior stairs can make strong vertical elements, but exterior stairs, where they can be justified, are an even richer source of sculptural effects because they can introduce curves and graded shadows. If cantilevered they add a weightiness that hints of danger. Vertical and horizontal masses are often grouped side by side without seeming to touch. If they do touch they can be made to collide or bite pieces out of each other. Some versions of this mode owe more to Frank Lloyd Wright, de Stijl, and Constructivism than to Le Corbusier. Characteristically they have vertical and horizontal elements graded in size, thickness, color, and texture, often made to bypass each other without actually intersecting. This effect can make even a simple composition look quite busy. Another Wrightian variation entails the plaiting of horizontals and verticals. The horizontals dominate as cantilevered terraces with solid parapets. These compositions tend towards lightness or calm, but this can be overcome by introducing sharp, pointed corners, inclining the parapets, and adding small but insistent detail.

Certain forms are thought to be inherently interesting, regardless of context. Among them is the famous "Russian Wedge," an auditorium in a wedge-shaped block (like those by Konstantin Melnikov), cantilevered in startling ways or in improbable places. Sometimes one element, a roof for example, can be enlarged to look like a whole building, or like a wedge-shaped auditorium.

Cantilevers can make portions of a building hover in mid-air, but whole blocks can be held aloft, or made to look as if they are piled on top of each other. At this extreme the idea of composition itself is called into question. The parts of a building may be scattered and linked in what is meant as a dynamic, use-related conjunction, free of all prior commitments to ideas of order. But like aleatoric music, which in some ways it resembles, the spontaneous or random disposition of elements tends to get fixed in place—for convenience in musical performance, from necessity in architecture. The elements of what is meant to look unorganized are finally perceived as having their own order, if only because every other kind has been excluded.²⁹

²⁹ Arthur Drexler, "Transformation in Modern Architecture" (New York Museum of Modern Art, 1979).

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Tucson City Hall developed directly from this architectural pedagogy. Locally, during the late early 1960s, several Tucson based architects, including Friedman & Jobusch, William Wilde, Cain Nelson Ware & Cook, Robert Swaim, and Judith Chafee, began experimenting with the brutalist idiom, responding and tailoring designs to the environmental conditions of the Arizona Sonoran Desert. These architectural compositions employed new technologies and utilized concrete in an expressive form. Tucson City Hall is an outstanding example of this movement.

Bernard Friedman (1916 - 2012), Architect

Bernard J. Friedman's architectural work contributed to Tucson's mid-century modern commercial design idiom. Between 1940 and the 1970s, his small- and large-scale expressive projects distinguished downtown Tucson and the emerging suburbs with a progressive architectural identity. Through structural exuberance, smart proportions, and chic design, his commercial, educational, and religious buildings clearly express national and international trends consciously adapted to the desert climate. His bold architectural statements varied between the excitement and elegant expressions of modernism, and the weight and monumentality of civic design. Friedman was born to immigrant parents and raised in Chicago. Graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture from the University of Illinois in 1938, he moved to Tucson in 1940.

During World War II he served as a Construction Officer with the U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps in the European Theatre between 1942 and 1946. Friedman was discharged in 1946 and returned to Tucson where he married Irma. By 1948 he had partnered with architect William Green. Together, Green and Friedman designed several residential and commercial projects including Los Patio at 3318 – 40 East 1st Street, the El Presidio Hotel at Broadway, and 4th Avenue projects, including the new Temple Emanu-El auditorium at 225 North Country Club Road. The auditorium accommodated 650 and was designed to be eclipsed by and integrated into the future sanctuary.

In February 1948, Friedman announced the establishment of an independent architecture and allied design practice, relocating his office to 210 North Church Street. Friedman's commercial architecture of this period embraced the modernist movement with an emphasis on glass, materials, structural systems, and expressive forms. During 1949, Friedman designed the Given Brothers Shoes Co. building at 57 East Pennington, and the Recreational and Social Center for the Jewish Community Center on Tucson Boulevard. In early 1951, Friedman designed the new school building for Congregation Anshei Israel. During the 1951 to 1953 Korean conflict, Lieutenant Commander Friedman was called back to Washington, D.C. to serve as Coordinator for the Engineering & Technical Services Division, Bureau of Yards and Docks.

He returned from active duty in August 1953 and announced the reopening of his architectural practice at 2233 East Broadway. By September he had been commissioned to design the new Jewish Community Center on South Plumer Avenue, north of Broadway, replacing the building at 134 South Tucson Boulevard. The same year he designed the Rillito Park steel and concrete grandstand, and the subdivision model house: The Arizona Contemporary built by J. R. Schibley at 7210 North Oracle Road.

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In 1954 Friedman designed two iconic modernist store fronts that expressed the post WWII era American commercial architectural identity: Daniel's Jewelers at 21 East Congress built by M. M. Sundt Construction, and Hirsh's Shoes at 2934 East Broadway Boulevard.

In April 1955 he designed the storefront at 2901 Broadway for Mr. and Mrs. Max Saltzman. The expansive glass windows and long horizontal lines transformed storefront design, a clear departure from the narrow storefronts synonymous with dense commercial districts and development patterns of the pre-war era. The Saltzman building was designed with the automobile in mind; the glass window walls maximized the display of these products. In October 1956 Friedman established a partnership with university classmate Fred H. Jobusch. Friedman and Jobusch, Architects & Engineers was formed.

During his career, Friedman served as the president of the Southern Arizona Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a member of the Planning and Zoning Committee of the American Institute of Architects, a member of the Architectural Advisory Committee of Pima County, Arizona, and the Architectural Advisor for the Tucson Jewish Community Center. He also served as member of the Board of Directors of the Tucson Botanical Society, Tucson Chamber of Commerce, Tucson Festival Society, and the City of Tucson Building Code Review Committee. Bernard J. Friedman died on June 21, 2012, at the age of 96.

Fred H. Jobusch (1916 - 1987), Architect and Engineer

Fred H. Jobusch was born in Collinsville, Illinois. Jobusch received his Bachelor of Science degree in architectural engineering from the University of Illinois in 1937. Between graduation and 1945, he worked as a structural and architectural designer and draftsman. He moved to Tucson in 1945 and between March 1946 and September 1956 he worked as an architectural engineer for several Tucson based architectural firms, working as a self-employed professional consulting structural engineer for a period of time.

In October 1956, he and Friedman formed Friedman and Jobusch Architects & Engineers. As a partner of Friedman & Jobusch, he was one of the designers of the University Medical Center and many other institutional and commercial projects in southern Arizona. He left the firm 24 years later and opened his own architectural consulting office. Jobusch was involved in the planning of Sahuaro and Marana high schools and several buildings at the University of Arizona, including the Harvill Building and the Main Library.

Jobusch also belonged to numerous professional and civic organizations. He served as international president of the Sertoma Club of Tucson from 1953 to 1954. From September 1953 to June 1959, he served as a member on the Arizona State Board of Technical Registration for Architect, Engineers, Geologists, Land Surveyors, and Assayers, holding the role of Chairman from 1955 to 1956. He joined the American Institute of Architects in 1948 and was the Southern Arizona Chapter President, Chairman and Judiciary Committee Member from 1962 to 1969. He was a member of the Tucson Planning and Zoning Commission from 1962 to 1964, and the Tucson Architectural Approval Board in 1967. Jobusch joined the Tucson Chamber of Commerce, served as president of the Arizona Society of Professional Engineers, and on the board of Structural Engineers Association of Arizona, Tucson Chapter. Jobusch was also a member of the Professional Advisory Council to the College of Architecture at the University of Arizona and served on the University of Arizona Foundation.

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In 1975 Jobusch became a member of the prestigious College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects. He was also a member of the National Society of Professional Engineers, the State Board of Technical Registration for Architects and Engineers, and the American Institute of Architects (Arizona Daily Star, 1987). Jobusch retired in 1987 for health reasons and died the same year.

Friedman & Jobusch, AIA Architects and Engineers

The firm Friedman & Jobusch was among the most prominent in Tucson, with their influence extending throughout the state of Arizona and beyond. Between its establishment in 1956 and the early 1960s, the firm's projects covered a broad range of commercial, civic, educational, and municipal buildings.

Commercial projects:

- Valley National Bank Branch (4402 E. Broadway Boulevard; this sculptural regional landmark is perhaps the firm's most recognized and iconic building and has been featured in Dwell Magazine and national TV shows)
- Levy's Department Store at El Con Mall (the first Levy's Department Store in Tucson, built in 1960 and designed in partnership with Albert C. Martin and Associates of Los Angeles)
- Kal Ruben City
- Amphi Plaza Shopping Center
- Jewish Community Center additions
- Nehring Insurance Agency Building
- Arnic Renst Building
- Copa Bowl
- Cactus Bowl
- 64 lanes
- Gordon's El Rancho store (3396 East Speedway)
- Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity House
- Alpha Epsilon Phi Sorority House
- Campbell Plaza Shopping Center
- First National Bank El Con
- Plaza International Hotel
- Aztec Inn
- Arizona Bank Building, Stone and Alameda
- Arizona Bank, Stone Avenue and 2nd Street Branch
- Arizona Bank, Broadway Branch
- Arizona Bank, Nogales
- Duval Corporation Building
- Empire Ranch Community Development Center GAC Corporation
- Federal Building, Additions and Alterations, GSA
- Hopper Truck Lines
- Johnnie's Drive-In
- Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith

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Commercial projects continued:

- Pueblo Ford
- Rincon Country Club
- Stratford Pharmacy & Medical Center
- Tri-Palms Estate
- 2221 Broadway Building
- Chris-Town Mall in Phoenix
- Dorado Country Clubhouse
- El Dorado Motel in Nogales, Arizona
- Shopping center in Key West, Florida

Educational buildings:

- University of Arizona buildings: College of Medicine, Agricultural Sciences Building, Physics-Math-Meteorology Building, Pharmacy-Microbiology Building, and Chemistry Building
- Pima Community College West Campus
- Sahuaro High School
- Canyon del Oro High School
- Donaldson Elementary School
- Katherine Van Buskirk Elementary School
- Clara Fish Roberts Elementary School

Religious buildings:

- Congregation Anshei Israel
- St. Albans Episcopal Church
- St. Mark's Methodist Church
- Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church

Civic buildings:

- Tucson City Hall
- Little Theater and Music Hall at the Tucson Community Center
- Kitt Peak National Observatory buildings: Office Buildings & Shops, Astro-Physics, Environmental, Electronic, Instrumentation, Computer and Optical Laboratory facilities
- Nogales Neighborhood Center

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Harold Ashton, Builder

Harold Ashton (1915- 2003) was born in Indianapolis and moved with his family to Tucson in 1927, attending Roskrige Junior High and Tucson High School. He attended the University of Arizona for two years. During WWII, he worked for Tucson contractor, John Joynt, building military facilities. When the war ended, he launched his own firm. He started the Harold Ashton Building Co. in 1946 and then the Ashton Company in 1953. The firm grew to 400 employees, building roads and public structures including Tucson Vocational High School, the mid-century Pima County Courthouse, additions to the University of Arizona football stadium, 20 major buildings on the University of Arizona campus, and the control tower at Tucson International Airport. Ashton served on several boards including the Tucson Airport Authority (as chairman), the Tucson Chamber of Commerce, Greater Tucson Economic Council, Tucson Medical Center, Arizona Town Hall, Kino Community Hospital, and the National Association of General Contractors of Americas (as a Life Director). He also helped establish the College of Medicine at the University of Arizona and was a noted philanthropist who donated \$1 million to the Boys and Girls Club of Tucson.³⁰

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Setting and Site Features

Tucson City Hall sits on an irregular-shaped parcel between W. Alameda Street to the north and W. Pennington Street to the south. It is bordered by El Presidio Plaza to the east and a surface parking lot to the west. Further west is N. Granada Avenue. Original concrete steps with metal railings lead up to the building at the north, west, and south sides. Streetlights installed in 1996 line the sidewalk that lead to the north entry. Original covered walkways with scored concrete floors envelop the building on all sides. Other character-defining exterior hardscape features include original exposed aggregate concrete planters and retaining walls. To the north of the building is a small open space area that contains features post-dating the period of significance. During the period of significance, part of this area was occupied by the 1916 City Hall building. A historical plaque marks the site of the First Presbyterian Church of Tucson, which was demolished for the construction of the 1916 City Hall building. The 1916 City Hall was later demolished in 1972. The area north of the 1961-66 City Hall now features modern desert landscaping, benches, sculptures, monuments, and a Seiko clock installed in 1983 – none of which were part of Friedman & Jobusch’s original design. To the east of City Hall is additional open space. A photograph from the period of significance shows it originally featured a section of grass turf before terminating in a sidewalk and Meyer Avenue (see Figure 13). Today the grassy areas and that portion of Meyer Avenue are gone. The space east of City Hall connects to Presidio Plaza and consists of concrete. In the southwest corner of the parcel is a surface parking lot, which is utilitarian and not considered a character-defining feature of Friedman and Jobusch’s City Hall. To the west of City Hall stands a recreation of the southwest corner of the Tucson Presidio wall to mark its original location. A plaque installed in the recreated wall states, “Excavations beneath this lawn in 1998 located the west adobe wall of the Tucson Presidio and a portion of the Pacheco blacksmith shop.”

³⁰ “Harod Ashton Obituary” (Arizona Daily Star, December 1, 2003), 12.

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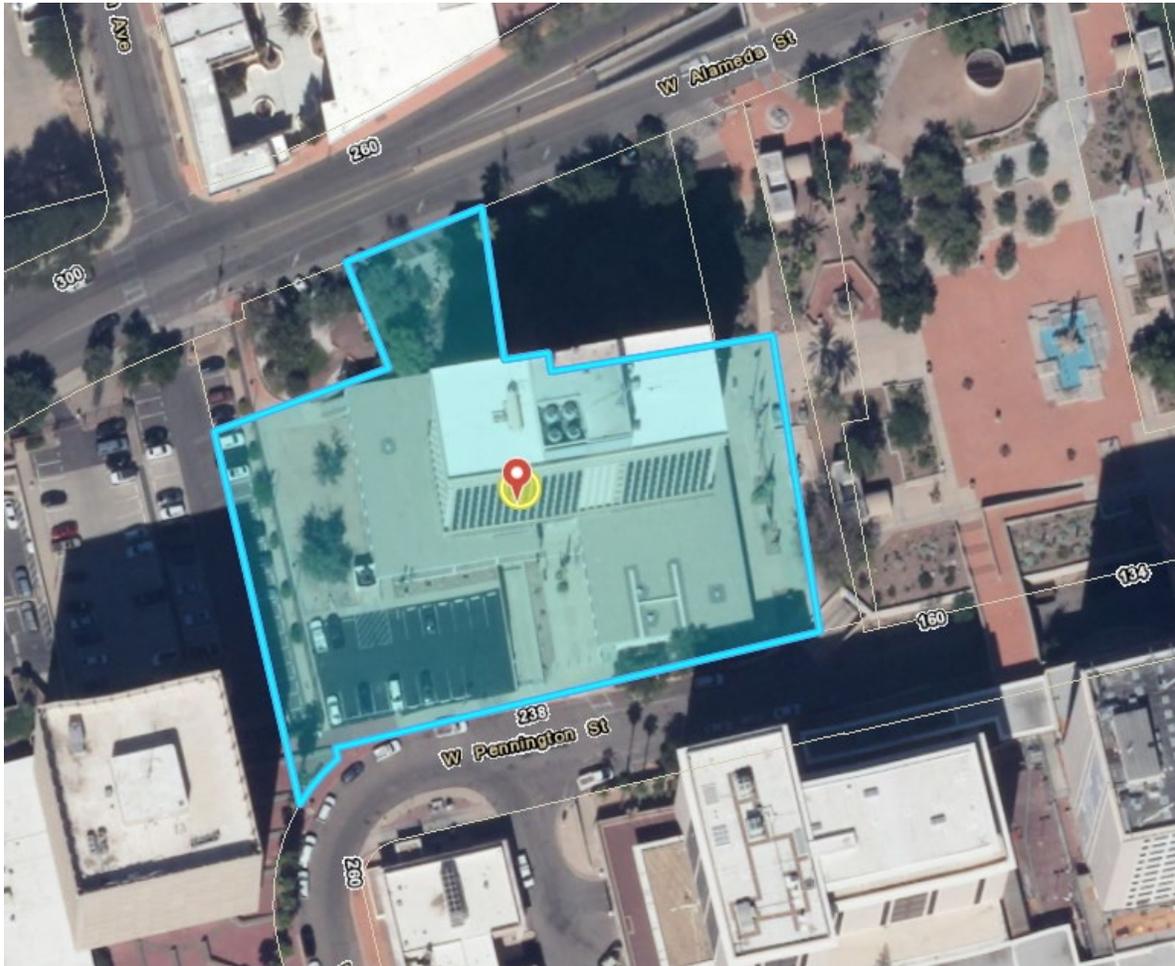


Fig. 20. Aerial photograph with boundary of parcel where Tucson City Hall sits (MapTucson 2025).

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Exterior Building Features

The north facade, oriented toward the civic plaza, is the building's most formal and expressive and includes the main entrance and integrated entry stairs. A broad horizontal base anchors the composition, articulated with smooth wall planes and deeply set fenestration. Rising above this podium is the rectilinear tower, its verticality establishing the symbolic seat of city government within the downtown skyline. The north side of the building is symmetrical and disciplined in composition, balancing the scale of the lower floors with the height of the tower. Finishes employ muted desert tones, recalling regional material traditions while adhering to modernist restraint.

The east facade emphasizes the horizontal character of the complex. This side reflects the 1961 initial construction phase, designed as a one-story building with elongated massing. Fenestration is recessed and shielded by overhangs, a deliberate response to solar exposure. The facade reads as functional and understated, but the careful alignment of windows and the continuity of wall surfaces reinforce the civic dignity of the design. At the ground level is the entrance to the Mayor and Council chambers.

The west elevation continues the vocabulary of planar wall surfaces punctuated by measured fenestration. The tower mass projects visibly above, marking the building's profile from adjacent streets. Openings respond to the orientation and climatic considerations. The restrained treatment maintains consistency with the other facades, avoiding ornament and relying on proportion, rhythm, and materiality for effect.

The south elevation accommodates secondary service functions yet remains integrated into the overall composition. The base continues in the same material palette, and fenestration is limited. Screened zones and recessed bays discreetly incorporate building systems and circulation areas. Even in its functional role, the south facade preserves the architect's commitment to balance and visual coherence.

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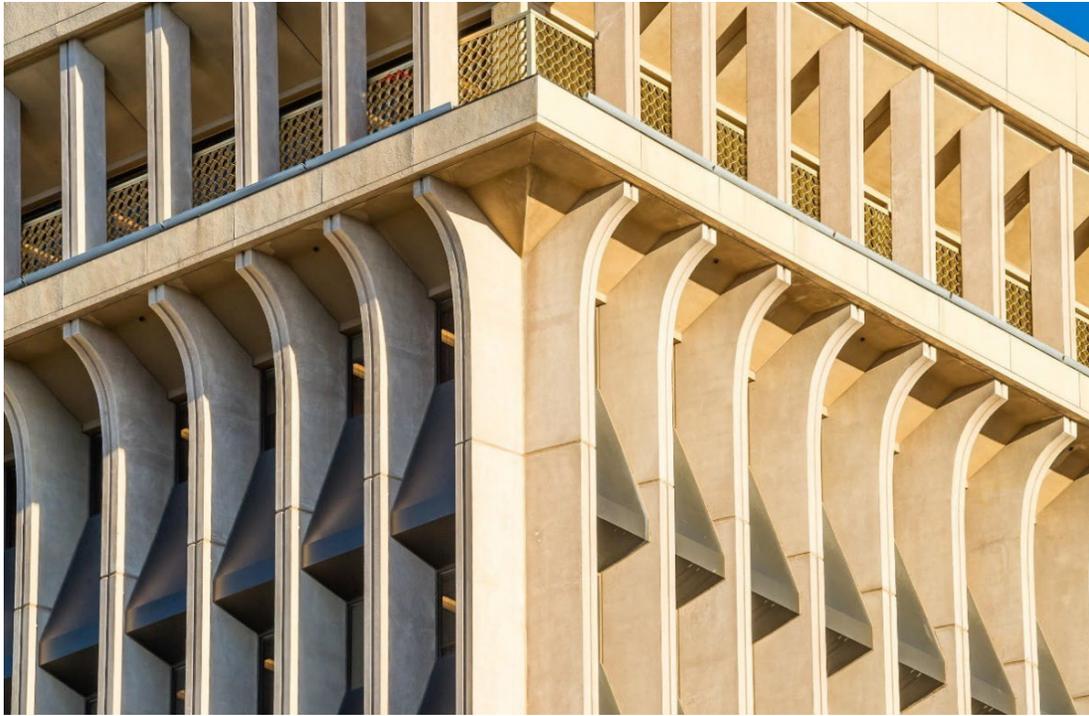


Fig. 21. Tucson City Hall, detailing, photo by GMVargas for THPF.

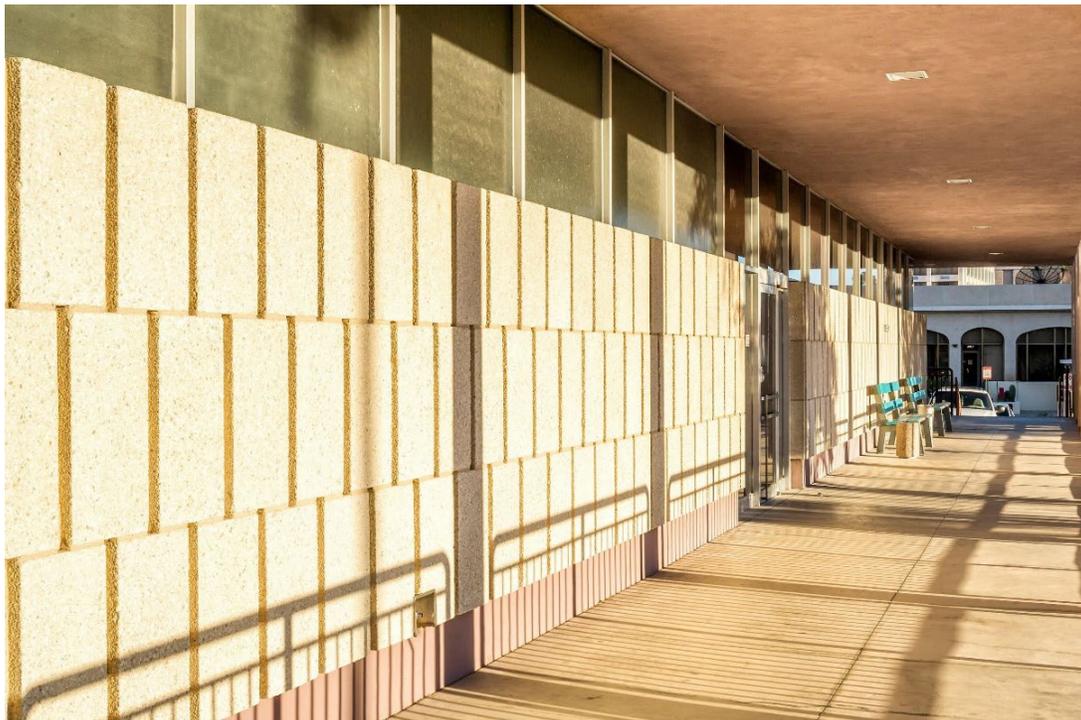


Fig. 22. Tucson City Hall, west elevation, first floor detailing, photo by GMVargas for THPF.

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Interior Features

Council Chambers

The Mayor and Council Chambers at Tucson City Hall exemplify mid-century modern civic design, emphasizing clarity, order, and accessibility. The space is organized around a semi-circular plan, which focuses attention on the raised dais where the Mayor and Council preside. The dais is clad in dark wood veneer with integrated microphones and seating for elected officials, set against a backdrop of vertical curtains that establish a dignified yet restrained focal wall.

The chamber's most striking architectural feature is its ceiling plane, a continuous, curving surface with recessed cove lighting that creates a soft, indirect glow around the perimeter. Rectangular skylight-like panels provide additional illumination, reinforcing the modernist preference for diffuse, even light.

Seating for the public consists of fixed molded fiberglass chairs, arranged in curved rows that mirror the geometry of the dais. Each seat is mounted on a single pedestal base, allowing for visual consistency and efficient maintenance. The audience seating is distinguished from the dais by low wood railings and changes in floor elevation, subtly demarcating the functional zones of the room.

The materials - wood veneer and upholstered executive chairs at the dais - reflect the modernist civic palette of the 1960s. Acoustic wall treatments in the form of vertical wood slats line portions of the perimeter walls, providing both functional sound control and a rhythmic architectural element. Integrated control panels and microphone stations at the clerks' and staff tables demonstrate the mid-century embrace of technology in the service of civic function.

The result is a chamber that is both modern and formal: a space where democratic process is expressed through architectural order, clean lines, and a hierarchy of seating arrangements.

Board Room

Attached to the Council Chambers is the Council Board Room. It is a rectangular, formally composed space designed to accommodate administrative deliberations and smaller civic functions. The walls are articulated with a combination of wood paneling and exposed concrete, materials that reflect both the warmth of mid-century interiors and the structural honesty associated with modernist civic design. The wood paneling provides visual order and acoustic moderation, while the concrete surfaces emphasize permanence and institutional gravitas.

Lobby

The primary entry lobby of Tucson City Hall is a formal, rectilinear space designed to establish a dignified and durable civic atmosphere. The floor is finished in terrazzo, a hallmark of mid-century municipal architecture, selected for its permanence, ease of maintenance, and refined appearance. The terrazzo surface presents a continuous, polished plane across the public circulation zone, anchoring the space in a material vocabulary consistent with the modernist emphasis on durability and order.

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Along the north and south walls are glass window wall systems. To the east of the main lobby space is the elevator bank, which is composed of a series of flush elevator doors. The alignment of the elevator bays underscores the clarity and axial organization of the lobby.

The surrounding wall surfaces are defined by a combination of wood veneer panels and plaster finishes, providing visual warmth and contrast to the terrazzo floor. The ceiling is articulated with a suspended grid incorporating integrated fluorescent lighting panels, distributing uniform, glare-free illumination across the lobby. This treatment reinforces the architectural clarity of the space while maintaining a modernist emphasis on functional lighting.

The lobby functions as a transitional zone between the civic plaza and the administrative spaces of the building. Its restrained material palette—terrazzo, wood, metal, and plaster—embodies the mid-century modern civic ideal of permanence, transparency, and institutional dignity, while the axial arrangement of circulation elements reflects the architectural order of Friedman & Jobusch's overall design.

10th Floor: Mayor and Managers Offices

The tenth floor of Tucson City Hall was designed as the executive suite for the Mayor, City Manager, and senior officials. The interiors reflect a higher degree of finish and refinement compared to standard office levels, underscoring the prestige of the floor's occupants. Offices are arranged along the perimeter, with large windows providing expansive views of downtown Tucson and the surrounding mountains.

Interior finishes include wood veneer wall paneling, broadloom carpeting, and suspended acoustic tile ceilings with integrated fluorescent lighting in a rectilinear grid. The furnishings follow a mid-century modern aesthetic, with clean-lined desks, upholstered seating, and modular lounge furniture that project efficiency, authority, and restrained sophistication. Floor-to-ceiling draperies soften the perimeter glazing, creating a more formal setting for executive meetings and civic functions.

One of the most distinctive features of the tenth floor is its wrap-around balcony, designed both as a functional amenity and a climatic adaptation. The balcony is enclosed by a continuous decorative screen of gold-anodized aluminum rings, arranged in a repetitive geometric grid. The screen casts dynamic shadows across the balcony surface, creating a constantly shifting play of light that animates the building's exterior and interior alike. This screen functions as a brise-soleil, shading the executive offices from the desert sun while reinforcing the modernist commitment to functional ornament. The anodized aluminum material reflects the technological optimism of the mid-1960s, while the gold finish provides a distinctive civic identity, setting City Hall apart as both modern and monumental.

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Context Photo



Fig. 23. View from Alameda Street, facing southwest (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2025).

North Facade



Fig. 24. North facade, facing south (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2025).

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Fig. 25. View of tenth floor wraparound balcony, north facade, facing south. (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2025).



Fig. 26. Walkway from Alameda Street leads to north entry, facing south (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).

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Fig. 27. North entry of City Hall, facing southwest (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).



Fig. 28. Walkway at north facade, facing west (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).

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Fig. 29. Cast stone concrete and metal sash windows at north facade, facing south (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).

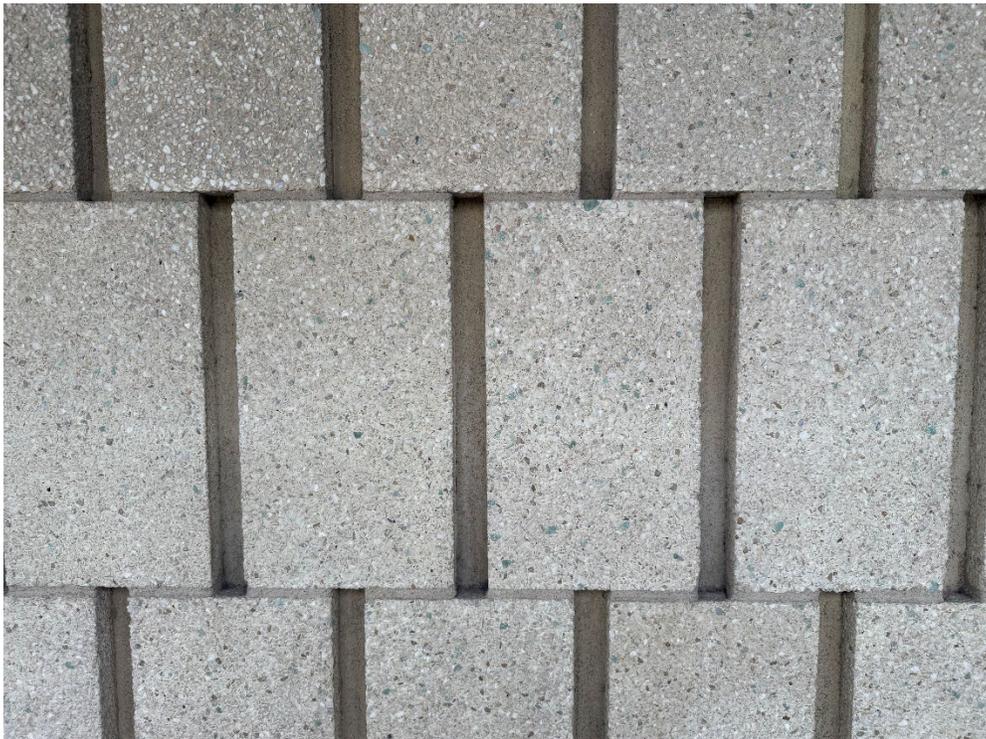


Fig. 30. Detail of cast stone concrete, north facade, facing south (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).

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Fig. 31. Detail of north facade, facing south (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).



Fig. 32. Northwest corner, facing southeast (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2025).

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West Facade

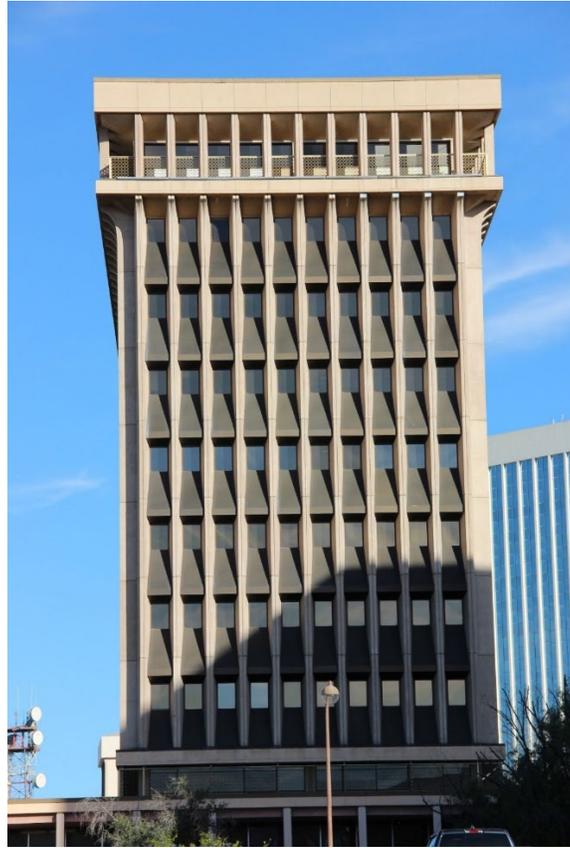


Fig. 33. West facade of tower, facing east (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2025).



Fig. 34. Stairway at west facade, facing southeast (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).

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Fig. 35. Recreation of Tucson Presidio wall, west of City Hall, facing south (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).



Fig. 36. Recreation of Tucson Presidio wall, west of City Hall, facing south (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).

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South Facade



Fig. 37. South facade, facing north (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2025).



Fig. 38. Entry at south facade, facing north (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2025).

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East Facade



Fig. 39. East facade of tower, facing southwest (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Dec. 2025).



Fig. 40. East facade, facing northwest (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).

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Fig. 41. Council Chambers at east facade, facing west (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).



Fig. 42. East walkway at ground floor, facing southwest (Tucson Historic Preservation Office, Jan. 2026).