

Tucson Community Center Historic District
Name of Property

Pima County, Arizona
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Tucson Community Center Historic District
other names/site number Tucson Convention Center, Fountain Plaza, Walkway, Veinte de Agosto Park or Eckbo Park

2. Location

street & number 180 – 260 South Church Avenue not for publication
city or town Tucson vicinity
state Arizona code AZ county Pima code 019 zip code 85701

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
9	2	structures
7	14	objects
17	16	Total

NR

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

- LANDSCAPE/plaza
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation
- TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related

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- RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation
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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: _____
walls: _____
roof: _____
other: Softscape: Trees, Plants, Earth;
Hardscape: Concrete, Rock, Metal, Brick
Ceramic Tile

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Tucson Community Center (TCC) Historic District, constructed between 1971 and 1974, consists of a public plaza, a walkway, and a small park. These three sections, designed by noted Modernist landscape architect Garrett Eckbo (1910-2000) are related in theme and design. The overarching intent of the landscape is to provide a gathering space outside the TCC cultural venues of arena, concert hall and theater; to offer opportunities for strolling and picnicking; to enhance characteristic Tucson views; and to create a pedestrian link between Tucson's downtown area and the TCC facilities. With an extensive system of fountains, balconies, stairways and pedestrian ramps, the design employs characteristic materials of the period: concrete, modular brick, mounded earth, trees and shrubs, flowing water and natural boulders. Together the three sections occupy a significant portion of the open space of downtown Tucson, approximately 5.75 acres. In an urban setting, the District is bounded by city streets, and by performance, office, café and hotel buildings, yet extensive views from the site include the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Augustine and the Tucson Mountains. Except for minor changes due to missing landscape elements and the addition of minor small-scale features, the District remains essentially as it was when first installed.

Narrative Description

The TCC Historic District is located to the southwest of downtown Tucson's commercial district, just north of the Barrio Viejo Historic District. Boundaries are roughly defined by Congress Street to the north, Cushing Street to the south, Church Avenue to the east and Granada Avenue to the west. To the east are views of the Cathedral of St. Augustine; to the west, the Tucson Mountains. The District does not include the surrounding buildings of an office/shopping/restaurant complex, a hotel, the Music Hall, the Arena or the Leo Rich Theater. The entire district is owned by the City of Tucson. At approximately 5.75 acres, the TCC Historic District represents one of the largest areas of open space in downtown Tucson. Complementing El Presidio Plaza and its government buildings across Congress Street to the north, the District provides an open core for large festivals and events. The District is accessible by foot, bicycle, bus and automobile, and is located adjacent to the new streetcar line. Before the 1960s and urban renewal redevelopment, this area was the heart of Tucson's Mexican-American barrio.

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The TCC Historic District draws its significance from its designer Garrett Eckbo, one of the twentieth century's foremost American landscape architects. Created at the height of his career, it was completed in three stages in 1971, 1973 and 1974, under the project direction of local architects and planners. This landscape is the only Eckbo-designed urban civic space in Arizona and one of only four large urban designs that were completed during his long career. The District retains a high degree of integrity, although time has taken its toll on some mechanical systems, original plantings and features, while the introduction of a number of non-contributing small-scale features has somewhat cluttered open areas.

General Description (Figures #1, #3 and #4)

The TCC Historic District lies to the south of Tucson's government center in Presidio Park and directly southwest of the central business district. It is composed of **three design sections – Veinte de Agosto Park, the Walkway and the Fountain Plaza** - running from north to south.

All three sections are conceptually linked by designed water features oriented in such a way as to appear to flow from northeast to southwest. Geometric forms are superimposed on one another or dissolve into naturalistic mounded earth; concrete basins are set off by natural boulders. Dynamic balance rather than symmetry suggests movement. More intimate secondary spaces flow into open plazas or provide transitions into performance venues. Lush yet climate-adapted vegetation provides both visual and physical relief from desert heat.

THE TCC HISTORIC DISTRICT: ONE DESIGN IN THREE SECTIONS

(A) Veinte de Agosto Park (Photos #1 - #3; Figures #5 - #8)

Veinte de Agosto Park lies at the northern end of the district. This segment does not have a Pima County parcel number, but it is an ordinance City of Tucson park, named in honor of the founding of Tucson Presidio on August 20th, 1775. It was dedicated on August 20th, 1978,¹ although the park had been completed earlier in 1971. This triangle of land is bounded on the east by Church Avenue, by Congress Street to the north, and by Broadway Boulevard to the south. Broadway Boulevard and Congress Street come together at the western point of the triangle. The area of the park is approximately equal to 1.1 acres.

The triangular park is divided into two sections by a semicircular traffic lane, which serves as a u-turn lane for eastbound traffic on Broadway Boulevard. To the west of the u-turn lane, an elevated pedestrian bridge crosses above the park to link the government buildings of El Presidio Plaza to the Walkway of the TCC Historic District. From the northern end of this bridge, there is a scenic overview of the park; and from across Broadway Boulevard to the south, the park serves as a podium to display the façades of the government buildings north of Congress Street (Photo #1). Typical highway-style street lighting is the only lighting in the park; this is not considered to be contributing.

The land falls away sharply from the northeast corner of the site at the intersection of Congress Street and Church Avenue, creating a difference in elevation of some four feet towards the southwest. This difference of level is accommodated by entry stairs from the north and east sides of the park (Photo #2). After this initial drop, the landscape slopes gently towards the point of the triangle to the west.

Set into the ground at the northeast corner of the site is an octagonal concrete fountain from which water flows downward through angular channels into two lower basins to the southwest and then west (Photos #2 and #3). The geometry of the lower basins is based on arcs aligned to park boundaries. In its descent water travels through channels cut through a series of concrete steps or terraces, so that it is possible to step across the water flow at several different points as it descends. The concrete walls that line the descending steps are indented at the base, creating an illusion of suspension – a characteristic design element found in all three sections of the district. Three street-level terraces flank the northeast corner, poking fingers into the site and providing an overview of the park from this high point. The railings are contributing, being visible in photos from 1974. Today non-contributing picnic tables have been introduced to these terraces.

¹"A Park for Pancho," *Tucson Daily Citizen*. June 29, 1981.

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From the end of the lowest basin an optical illusion suggests that the geometric fountain is draining into a designed wash framed by elevated earthen berms on both sides. This turf-covered channel points towards the steps leading up into the plaza of the office/shopping/restaurant complex across Broadway Boulevard (Photo #3). Turf covers mounded earth throughout the park, and groups of natural boulders scattered down the slopes punctuate the soft groundcover.

Mature trees are a significant feature of the park. Towards the western end of the park, nine *Pinus halepensis* (Aleppo pine) in loose groupings frame the view of the Tucson Mountains to the west. In the same area, three *Rhus lancea* (African sumac) also remain from the original installation. There are, in addition, a row of *Pistacia chinensis* (Chinese pistache) along the Church Street edge of the park and an additional *Pinus halepensis* (Aleppo pine) on the southwest; these are non-contributing. Overall, the trees help to shield visitors to the park from the view of the surrounding traffic. From outside the park they serve as an intermittent screen offering occasional views into the site.

A statue of Pancho Villa (a Mexican revolutionary general), a concrete bench, a street clock and several signs are non-contributing.

Eckbo's approach to design is imprinted on this section of the district. The concrete water sequence progresses from the formal geometry of an octagon to abstract arcs and then disappears between the berms of an artificial wash. This kind of structural transformation is found in all three sections of the district. Based on the visual artworks of twentieth-century artists such as Joan Miró, Paul Klee and Vassily Kandinsky, these strictly geometric two-dimensional designs are interpreted in three dimensions, eventually merging into a more natural, yet obviously designed, earthwork. The sequence also emphasizes 'tangible water', following Eckbo's emphasis on multisensory elements of design by putting visitor and water in close proximity. The diagonal siting of the fountain provides the "balanced equilibrium" mentioned in so many of Eckbo's theoretical writings. Formed concrete walls, indented at the base, reinforce this sense of dynamic balance. Gently mounded earth covered with turf is another characteristic use of materials during this period of Eckbo's career; it is featured in the Denver Botanic Garden and Union Bank Square. The counterpoint of boulder scatters against the softness of the turfed berms is, however, unique to the TCC landscape.

(B) Walkway (Photos #4 - #6; Figures #9 - #11)

At approximately .2 acres, the Walkway is, by comparison, a small area. Designed as pedestrian passage between a hotel to the west and an office/shopping/restaurant complex to the east, it is connected at its northern end to the pedestrian bridge that crosses above Veinte de Agosto Park. In addition, at the far northern end behind a freestanding wall, a flight of stairs leads down to Broadway Boulevard (some twelve feet below). A wall bench runs along the southeast corner of the site adjacent to the stairway. This may or not be original; the design of the railing, similar to the railings of the ramps designed to provide entrance to the hotel, suggests that it may be; but there is no photographic documentation of this. North of the stairway are ten *Thevetia peruviana* (yellow oleander). They may have been planted to serve as a hedge, but, if so, they are now overgrown. At the corner of the intersection with the pedestrian bridge is a mature *Plantanus wrightii* (Arizona sycamore). All remaining vegetation is that indicated in Eckbo's original planting plan. To the south the Walkway merges into the Fountain Plaza. This section of the district was completed in 1974,² after the construction of the hotel and the office/shopping/restaurant complex.

The surface of the Walkway is composed of incised 4' x 4' concrete squares.

The Walkway is bounded by buildings to the west and east. To the west is a twelve-story hotel, which has changed hands several times since it was first built. Its Walkway façade is punctuated in the center by a stairway leading down into a sunken courtyard (not designed by Eckbo), which divides the hotel into northern and southern sections. Large windows face the Walkway and offer views into the landscape from the interior of the ground floor of the hotel. Ramps running parallel to the building were designed by Eckbo to eliminate stairs and permit easy access to the ground floor of both north and south sections of the hotel. There is an additional ground-level door into the hotel at the northwest corner of the Walkway. To the east is a four-story office/shopping/restaurant complex, intended to provide a welcoming stretch of

²"'Mexican Village' Open to Public," *Arizona Daily Star*, May 3, 1974.

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sidewalk shops and restaurants. The design intent of this complex was to be “one architectural-style unit, possibly in the historic territorial style utilizing the heritage of the Placita Park Development”.³ The complex is designed in a faux-barrio style, with offset courtyards. Painted in a variety of contrasting colors in 1999, it draws the eye in a way that would not have been the case when it was built.⁴

The Walkway’s extended linear water sequence is placed somewhat off center to the west. The sequence is framed by rows of trees. To the west the trees are set in the ground; to the east they were originally planted in pots. The western row of trees is comprised of three separate planting areas inset in the concrete paving. In the northern section are three *Thevetia peruviana* (yellow oleander); it appears that there may originally have been four. These are underplanted with eight *Rhaphiolepis indica* (Indian hawthorn) of which one - or maybe two - are missing. In the central section are three *Plantanus wrightii* (Arizona sycamore). In the southern section are six *Rhus lancea* (African sumac); an empty space suggests that one is missing. On the east side, beyond the open pedestrian passage, a series of twelve rectangular brick inserts into the concrete paving order the placement of rectangular planters measuring 36” X36” X 22” high. Of these planters, eight remain in their original locations, one has been moved to the Fountain Plaza, and three are missing. Intended to contain trees of a single variety, the remaining planters now show a medley of assorted small trees, cactuses and other shrubs. The planters are indented at the base, a characteristic feature found throughout this design. An additional dozen red terracotta planters have been added to delineate restaurant seating; these are noncontributing. The water sequence runs the length of the long, relatively narrow and essentially level corridor, but an optical illusion achieved through the changing widths of the channel implies a water flow from north to south. The sequence terminates just before the Walkway meets the Fountain Plaza.

Against the freestanding wall to the north is a bubbler fountain set in a hemispherical cobbled basin (Photo #5). The fountain provides a setting for a stainless steel sculpture by Robert Tobias (1933 -). The sculpture appears in photographs of the fountain from 1974, but little is known about it or about the artist, other than his association with the University of Arizona. The Tucson-Pima County Arts Council includes the work in an inventory from 1978, but has no information on its acquisition. Unlike later art works placed in the Fountain Plaza or the statue of Pancho Villa in Veinte de Agosto Park, this sculpture was likely created as part of the Walkway project, but whether it was specifically chosen by Eckbo or simply commissioned by the City of Tucson is unknown.

A few feet to the south is a narrow (six-inch wide) water channel lined with aqua ceramic tile. The channel runs southward under three Eckbo-designed, formed concrete “peephole obelisks” which show small sections of one-inch tiles to match the color of the tiles lining the channel basins (Photo #5). These sculptures are 9’ tall x 3’ wide. South of the sculptures is a concrete crosswalk approximately 3’ wide, which provides the illusion of a bridge. South of the crosswalk the water sequence resumes as a wide (4’) rectangular channel, also lined with ceramic tile. This second channel ends at a second bridge-like cross walk leading to the sunken hotel courtyard to the west and into the plaza of the office/shopping/restaurant complex to the east. It is perhaps significant that this second crosswalk follows the alignment of Broadway Boulevard as it existed before the construction of the Tucson Community Center.

An Eckbo-designed cylindrical kiosk marks this crossing (Photo #4). Four original track lights are positioned near the top of each quarter of the cylinder; a pole extends up from the center. Due to the lack of photographic evidence it is not clear whether this pole supported a banner of some kind or a light. Originally the kiosks were designed to support counter level telephone booths; these have been removed. To the west of the kiosk are an Eckbo-designed water fountain and a cylindrical information pedestal topped with a metal location map. A second and identical water fountain is located on the east side of the walkway further to the north. These small scale features contribute to the district.

To the south of the brick crosswalk the narrow (6”) tiled channel resumes, passing under two more concrete “peephole obelisks” identical to the three to the north (Photo #6). This channel ends at a very narrow concrete crosswalk. Just beyond the crosswalk is a rectangular cobbled basin – its material identical to that of the fountain basin at the north - in which are set three “artesian” fountains: three bubbler fountains set on conglomerate concrete obelisks (Photo # 6). These

³ Candeub, Fleissig and Associates. *Need for Renewal: A Part of the Community Renewal Program of the City of Tucson, Arizona* (Tucson, AZ, November 1968).

⁴ Eddie North-Hager. “Old Pueblo’s Palette.” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, July 28, 1999.

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measure approximately 2' x 2' x 26" high, and they are set approximately 2' apart from each other. Water runs down the sides of the obelisks and drains into an opening that suggests a link to the water channel to the north. Throughout the Walkway the water sequence is set immediately adjacent to the pedestrian corridor, which runs along its east side.

All light fixtures supported by poles, as well as the lights on the central kiosk, are original and contribute to the historic fabric of the district. The globe lights have stainless half-globe caps, and range from one-globe to four-globe units, depending on location. Although this lighting supports the use of the space as an evening indoor/outdoor venue, it needs to be complemented – as was intended - by light from the ground floor interior of the hotel and office/shopping/restaurant complex to provide a sense of safety and security after dark.

In addition to the kiosk, the information pedestal and the two water fountains, there are six original Eckbo-designed benches in this area. As originally installed, these were sculptural in design. Formed concrete bases, indented at the bottom, supported heavy wooden beams (8" x 8") that served as seats. The bottom indentation suggests that the heavy benches are delicately balanced, although they are in fact bolted in place. Benches are sited in front of the ramp entrances to the hotel and outside the ground-level entrance to the hotel at the north end of the Walkway. The pedestals remain intact, identifiable by the indentation at the base, but at some point the heavy wooden seats were replaced by metal, bleacher-like tops. Despite the replacement of the seats, all original Eckbo benches are contributing.

Throughout its course the water sequence has been fenced off with a barrier line (presumably for safety reasons) of benches with concrete bases and aluminum seats. These can be distinguished from the Eckbo-designed benches because their bases are not indented at the bottom, but are merely concrete blocks. These benches are noncontributing.

The plan of this area is structurally intact, although the electrical system requires repair. Both water fountains show deterioration and the plumbing has failed. The seats of the Eckbo-designed benches have been replaced with aluminum tops. Some tiles are missing from the fountain basins. Several original trees are missing and most of the shrubs are overgrown. Yet this section of the landscape remains a popular destination for picnic lunches and afternoon breaks, and for prom, graduation and quinceañera photographs.

Stylistically this is a much more formal area than Veinte de Agosto. The materials include ceramic tile and brick, which are not found in Veinte de Agosto Park or in the Fountain Plaza to the south. No mounded earth or boulders are found in the Walkway. But the concept of an offset, non-symmetrical linear water feature, the presence of intensely green vegetation and the dynamically-indented bases for benches and planters link all three design segments.

(C) Fountain Plaza (Photos #7 - #13; Figures #12 - #20)

The Fountain Plaza is the largest of the three sections, at 4.3 acres. The plan view reveals radial patterns stretching out from the Leo Rich Theater and from the center point of a plaza adjacent to the northeast corner of the Arena. As the rays spread out, they are interrupted by other geometric forms: grids, sweeping arcs and rectangles. Eventually these two-dimensional forms intersect with the three-dimensional space of the sloping site, accommodated by stairs and ramps set at an angle or aligned to yet another arc. While the eastern section of the landscape along Church Avenue is relatively level, the central section drops 24 feet in elevation from east to west as the land falls off towards the Santa Cruz River. This section of the district was completed in 1971.

The Fountain Plaza serves multiple purposes. A large central water sequence (Photo #7) and grids of shade trees (Figure #13) offer an attractive setting in which to linger during lunchtime, work breaks and before and between performances held in the adjacent Arena, Music Hall and Leo Rich Theater. Open areas provide space for major events and annual festivals as well as for informal outdoor performances. Like the Walkway, the Fountain Plaza serves as a location for wedding, prom, graduation and quinceañera photographs.

Trees planted in geometric grids are found in the northeast corner of the Arena, to the east and north of the Music Hall, and to the west of the office/shopping/restaurant complex. Geometric concrete slabs with trowel finish inset with modular brick outline the planting wells. Taking as a cue the visual arts of Joan Miró, Paul Klee and Vassily Kandinsky, these grids intersect with other two- and three-dimensional geometric forms, including arcs, diagonals, curved or angular stairways

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and battered walls. In some cases grids of trees extend beyond the paved areas to continue the grid pattern into a lawn or poured concrete in-ground planter. This geometry contributes to the district. Most of the grids are planted with *Rhus lancea* (African sumac), but an inner area near the office/shopping/restaurant complex is planted with *Morus sp.* (mulberry). The two species intersect in a grid to the northeast of the Music Hall. The majority of trees planted in pavement grids survive.

Turf-covered berms along the eastern edge of the plaza separate pedestrians from motorists. The berms also reduce the sound of traffic and screen the view of the traffic from inside the plaza and provide a grassy podium for viewing the Cathedral of St. Augustine to the east across Church Avenue (Photo #10). The brick and concrete grid at the northeast corner of the Arena extends beyond the plaza to create an intriguing allée (Photo #9) along Church Avenue (Photo #9). On the street side a row of *Rhus lancea* (African sumac) is planted into the extended paving grid; on the inside trees are planted into a turf-covered berm – yet another example of Eckbo's use of dynamic equilibrium. At some point, presumably to provide additional access, this berm was pierced by a passageway into the plaza beyond.

To the south second long berm (Photo #13) was intended to conceal from Church Avenue the parking lot to the east of the Arena. But because the original planting of *schinus molle* (American pepper tree) has largely disappeared from this berm, this concept is only intermittently successful today. And while Eckbo's plan and early photographs show the berm continuing along Cushing Street to the south, the western half of the Cushing Street berm has been lost through modification to Arena parking. Because of its lack of integrity this area is not included within the boundary of the TCC Historic District.

The western edge of the plaza is lined with an irregular planting or grove of *Pinus canariensis* (Canary Island pines) to frame a spectacular view of the Tucson Mountains – a design element that recalls a similar planting at the western end of Veinte de Agosto Park.

Groves of *Syagrus romanzoffiana* (queen palm) are found to the east of the Leo Rich Theater and in the circular drop-off area to the north of the Music Hall, providing points of orientation in the landscape.

Two original specimen trees are particularly worth noting for their size and dramatic effect. One of these is a *Ceratonia siliqua* (carob) set into a concrete planter at the southwest corner of the Leo Rich Theater; the other is a mature *Olea europea* (olive) at the southwest corner of the water sequence. The *Olea europea* (olive) is one of the largest trees in the plaza.

The plaza area to the north/northeast of the Arena provides an entryway and outdoor lobby. Here a bubbler fountain originally provided a point of departure for the radiating concrete arcs that extend out towards the Leo Rich Theater until they are interrupted by the arc of a large planter/seat wall containing five large *Eucalyptus sp.* (eucalyptus) or by the first of many grids of *Rhus lancea* (African sumac). The original fountain (Figure #19) encouraged children to play in it, following Eckbo's intention, but in 1985 the fountain was replaced by a large metal sculpture entitled *The Door is Always Open* by John Heric. The sculpture is non-contributing.

Two features dominate the central plaza to the east of the Music Hall entrance, establishing the overall form of the area. Two large concrete planters with battered walls are linked by a staircase in the form of an arc, creating a forecourt for the Music Hall entrance. An extended water sequence expands the design concept initiated in Veinte de Agosto Park and the Walkway with a series of linked basins and pools displaying water in all its forms – rushing, falling, swirling, lapping and pooling. The soundscape radiates outward from the Music Hall, with quiet pools near the entrance and noisy, splashing falls further out. The basins of the fountain are composed of poured-in-place concrete, punctuated by scatters of boulders not unlike those found in areas of turf both in this plaza and in Veinte de Agosto Park. That these fountains were intended to be accessible to visitors is confirmed by the presence of steps leading into the water at the southern end of the sequence. It was not long, however, before this accessibility was discouraged, although both City Architect Russ Eley and Garrett Eckbo are quoted as saying that while reasonable safety was to be expected in public spaces, "we should also expect people to exercise normal care in finding their way through the physical world."⁵ An area of turf-covered

⁵ Christina Collins. "Sole-Talk Centering on Downtown Pond," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, December 5, 1974.

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mounded earth at the south end of the water sequence was intended to provide a place to sit and enjoy the shade of an irregular grove of trees.

The water sequence is worthy of further description. The most northerly section is the most dramatic. Concrete slabs are punctuated by natural boulders, and a raised basin permits water to rush down several levels in a noisy cascade. A shallow rectangular pool between the southern end of this section and the Music Hall is fed by water flowing under a wide pedestrian bridge at ground level. An open plaza area lying between the office/shopping/restaurant complex and the Music Hall entrance suggests another bridge across the water sequence, forming a separation between its northern and southern sections. To the south water flows from a rectangular tank or pool to fall over a concrete slab into a deeper basin set with natural boulders. At the end of this flow, water collects in a deep, irregularly shaped basin. Steps lead down into the water, confirming Eckbo's intention that people should have access to it.

More intimate spaces surround the main plaza area and provide transitions to the performance venues. These include a curved balcony terrace along the southwestern arc of the Leo Rich Theater set with *Brachychiton populeus* (bottle tree), separated from the plaza by a pony wall (Photo #11); a semicircular mini-park set with five mature *Olea europaea* (olive) jutting out from the north side of the Arena arcade overlooking the plaza area below; and a series of stepped concrete planters filled with trees and shrubs framing the sides of the Music Hall and providing adjacent outdoor space during intermissions. All these secondary areas have direct connections to the central plaza area while providing niches for quieter human interaction.

Many of the forms and materials found in this space are similar to those found in Veinte de Agosto Park: mounded earth covered with turf and punctuated by scatters of natural boulders; formed concrete basins; and walls inset at the base. Stylistic links to the Walkway include modular rectangles of brick to set off grids of trees. One of the three original kiosks (identical to the one remaining in the Walkway) constructed in the Fountain Plaza is retained at the western end of the plaza to the north of the Arena; the accompanying drinking fountain and cylinder information pedestal are missing. The two other original kiosk groupings – one set outside the Arena entrance and the other at the top of the steps at the northeast corner of the Music Hall – have been removed. The remaining kiosk is a contributing feature.

In-ground planters of poured concrete serve as transitional areas stepping down to the plaza from the north side of the Arena and both sides of the Music Hall. Many of the original trees and most of the original shrubs have died, but a few hardy survivors remain. Two large poured concrete battered wall planters set off an open plaza to the east of the water sequence. Original *Jasminus mesnyi* (primrose jasmine) survives in the northern of the two.

Mounded earth intended to be covered with turf is found in areas throughout the plaza. While the original turf remains in the eastern sections of the landscape, it has been replaced with decomposed granite in the area immediately to the south of the water sequence, in the area at the western edge of the plaza, and to the south of the Music Hall. In the area of mounded earth immediately to the south of the water sequence a former area of turf has been replaced with river rock punctuated with specimen cacti. This vegetation is non-contributing.

The southern section of the Fountain Plaza shows a continuation of the earthen mounds found further north along Church Avenue. This section continues the streetscape of the northern section.

Lighting is an important feature of the Fountain Plaza (Figure #20). Numerous wall lights were positioned to flood the surface of the plaza and the water sequence at night; in-ground lighting highlighted trees; globe lights on poles provided the illusion of suspended orbs throughout the plaza. Many of these original pole lamps remain on site in good condition. Most of the other original lighting – all wall lighting and almost all in-ground lighting – has become nonfunctional. Various kinds of additional non-contributing lighting has been added, apparently for reasons of security.

Benches adjacent to the office/shopping/restaurant complex retain original poured concrete bases indented at the bottom, but the original wooden seats have been replaced by metal. Despite this alteration, the benches are contributing. All other original benches have been removed. Around the pools of the water sequence (apparently for safety reasons) and in other areas around the plaza (mainly against walls) are metal seats designed for a single person. This seating is non-contributing.

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Fifty-eight original planters are scattered throughout the site in groups of varying sizes (12"x36", 12"x48", 18"x24", 18"x48", 22"x24", 22"x36", 22"x48"). All planters feature an off-white concrete cylinder recessed inward at the base. These provide a subtle contrast to the rectangular planters of similar design found in the Walkway. As the beginning of a rehabilitation effort, twelve additional 18"x24" planters have been reproduced and installed on the plaza. These planters can be distinguished from the originals because they include drainage holes in the base. All original planters are contributing.

Three original signs remain in the Fountain Plaza, in front of the Arena, Leo Rich Theater and Music Hall entrances. All other signage, including three fourteen-foot tall metal structures advertising Visit Tucson, is non-contributing.

Nine public art sculptures were sited in the plaza between 1991 and 2006, along with a mineral sample that was placed in front of the Music Hall in 1997. These are non-contributing.

At some point after 1973 (presumably for safety) railings were added to the steps at the sides of the Music Hall and to all other steps except those to the northeast of the Music Hall. These are not contributing.

Circulation in the Fountain Plaza is less directed and obvious than in the two northern segments of the district. The Walkway provides an entrance from the north. A dropoff area, designed to be shared between the Music Hall and the hotel, provides access from the west. Here a visitor may choose to ascend a stairway or a ramp in the form of an arc. An article in the *Tucson Citizen* comments on this ramp as an accommodation for 'oldsters'.⁶ Two other entrances from the west appear to be little used. One of these is the original entrance from now non-existent parking to the west. The other is an ADA pathway along the south side of the Music Hall, installed by McGann & Associates of Tucson in 1999 at the same time that an ADA ramp was added to the south side of the Arena. Neither of these ADA accommodations is contributing. Two entrances lead in from Church Avenue to the east. One is the original entrance to the Arena; the second is a service alley north of the Leo Rich Theater. This alley was not originally intended as an entrance, but came to be used as such when the original TCC parking area to the west was moved in the late twentieth century. Today visitors may also enter through a passage cut through the center of the berm adjacent to Church Avenue facing the Cathedral.

Components of the surrounding architecture are visible and are an important aspect of the plaza.

- The Arena's integrated arcade (originally intended to provide a venue for outdoor art exhibits) is supported by structural, form-cast concrete pillars that create rectangular openings with mitered corners. Heavy, low rectangular massing of the main part of the building is juxtaposed with the integrated open arcade on the north, which interacts and engages with the landscape. The Arena was designed by Cain Nelson Ware and Friedman & Jobusch and completed in 1971. Eckbo's in-ground planters and semicircular balcony link the arena arcade to the plaza.
- The monumental Music Hall is framed by two massive incised columns to provide the space for interior stairwells. The primary construction material of the building is rough-cut concrete block. Recessed into the façade is a three-story glass window wall of divided lights. During the day and early evening the glass reflects the plaza, but at night Eckbo's lighting design – by using pole lights identical in style to the lobby chandeliers – integrates the plaza with the interior. The Music Hall was designed by Cain Nelson Ware and Friedman & Jobusch and completed in 1971.
- The Leo Rich Theater, also constructed out of rough-cut concrete, has a curved façade. The main entrance is set unobtrusively to one side, and the windowless façade is punctuated only by exit doors. Eckbo's elevated exterior reception deck is separated from the landscape by a formed cast concrete pony wall, behind which runs a row of *Brachychiton populneus* (bottle tree). The tree-shaded deck offers views of the Music Hall and the setting sun over the Tucson Mountains to the west. The theater was designed by Cain Nelson Ware and Friedman & Jobusch and completed in 1971.

⁶ Dan Pavillard. "Old Pueblo has a New Heart: The Tucson Community Center," *Tucson Daily Citizen* (October 30, 1971), 11-14.

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- The twelve-story hotel to the north features a cube set on top of a lobby platform. The multiple stories are characterized by long concrete columns that lean outward at the top. The window grid creates a very high level of geometry, reflecting the grids of the landscape ground plane. The hotel was designed by Landeco Incorporated and completed in 1973.
- The office/shopping/restaurant complex is composed of a series of angular irregular building forms and shapes that create openings, buildings and bridges adjacent to Walkway and Fountain Plaza. Originally, the color was intended to match the tone of adjacent light warm gray buildings, but in 1999 it was painted in multiple bright colors.⁷ The complex was designed by Architecture One Ltd. and completed in 1974. Grids of the plaza about the building.

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTING SITES, STRUCTURES AND OBJECTS

The TCC Historic District contains **one contributing site**, as defined by National Register Bulletin 16 as “designed landscapes”.⁸ This site is composed of three separate segments, which together form one landscape. Character-defining features of this site are berms of mounded earth, turf, brick and concrete paving, trees and shrubs and natural boulder cascades.

Nine contributing structures are found within the district. These include the three water sequences [one in each segment, labeled (A) on the diagrams]; four large in-ground planters (B) in the northern section of the Fountain Plaza; and two battered wall planters (C), also in the northern section of the Fountain Plaza. The district also includes **seven contributing objects**. One is the sculpture by Robert Tobias (D), located in the Walkway. The other six are groups:⁹ water fountains and kiosks, original lighting, original railings in Veinte de Agosto, original pots (fifty-eight of them remain on-site), original benches (eight remain on-site) and signage (three original signs remain on-site).

SUMMARY OF NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES AND OBJECTS

Two non-contributing structures are found in the Fountain Plaza: an ADA Walkway (E) and an ADA Ramp (F). There are also **thirteen non-contributing objects**. These include seven sculptures¹⁰ and one mineral specimen.¹¹ The other five non-contributing objects are groups: all non-original lighting, all non-original seating, all replacement vegetation, all railings in the Fountain Plaza, and the picnic tables in Veinte de Agosto Park.

⁷ North-Hager. "Old Pueblo's Palette."

⁸ United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division. *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, 1991), 15

⁹ This was recommended by Lisa Deline in her comments on the original submission of this National Register nomination (October 20, 2014). "While the nomination provides a detailed inventory of the civic space features, for purposes of the National Register nomination, not every bollard or light fixture needs to be counted. For those minor redundant historic features that are within the period of significance, simply state in the narrative description that all historic light fixtures are considered contributing. Represent them in the resource count as 'one contributing object.' Those minor features that are non-historic, count as 'one noncontributing object.'"

¹⁰ The Fountain Plaza contains *Arrows* (Fred Brocherdt, 1980), *Spherefield* (George Ehnat, 1983), *Medallion* (Edith Hamlin, early 1950s), *The Door is Always Open* (John Heric, 1985), *Untitled* (Alex Heveri, 2005), and *Earth/heart* (Chris Tanz, 2005). Veinte de Agosto Park contains a statue of Pancho Villa, given to the City of Tucson by Mexico in 1981.

¹¹ The Fountain Plaza contains *Azurite in Drusy Vugs, Malachite, Chrysocolla, Quartz and Iron Oxides* (donated to the City of Tucson by Allen W. and Ruthie A. Preston in 1997).

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Resource	Resource Type	Map Key ¹² or Location	Date	Evaluation
Designed landscape	1 Site		1971, 1973, 1974	Contributing
Water sequences	3 Structures	(A)	1971, 1973, 1974	Contributing
In-ground planters	4 Structures	Fountain Plaza (B)	1971	Contributing
Battered wall planters	2 Structures	Fountain Plaza (C)	1971	Contributing
Robert Tobias sculpture	1 Object	Walkway (D)	1974	Contributing
Kiosks and water fountains	1 Object	Walkway, Fountain Plaza	1971, 1974	Contributing
All original lighting	1 Object	Walkway, Fountain Plaza	1971, 1974	Contributing
All original benches	1 Object	Walkway, Fountain Plaza	1971, 1974	Contributing
All original pots (58)	1 Object	Walkway, Fountain Plaza	1971, 1974	Contributing
Original railings	1 Object	Veinte de Agosto	1971	Contributing
Original signage	1 Object	Fountain Plaza	1971	Contributing
ADA walkway	1 Structure	Fountain Plaza (E)	1999	Non-Contributing
ADA ramp	1 Structure	Fountain Plaza (F)	1999	Non-Contributing
7 sculptures	7 Objects	Fountain Plaza	Early 1950s, 1980, 1983, 1985, 22005, 2005	Non-Contributing
Mineral sample	1 Object	Fountain Plaza	1997	Non-Contributing
Non-original lighting	1 Object	Fountain Plaza	Varies	Non-Contributing
Non-original seating	1 Object	Walkway, Fountain Plaza	Varies	Non-Contributing
Non-original pots	1 Object	Walkway	Unknown	Non-Contributing
Railings	1 Object	Fountain Plaza	Varies	Non-Contributing
Replacement vegetation	1 Object	Veinte de Agosto, Fountain Plaza	Varies	Non-Contributing
Picnic tables	1 Object	Veinte de Agosto	Ca. 2000	Non-Contributing

Table of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

CONDITION

Veinte de Agosto Park is little changed since its installation. The water sequence is functional, and the lawn and trees have been well-maintained. The addition of small features – a street clock, signage, a memorial stone, railings and picnic tables – have little impact on the overall design. The overall condition of this segment of the District is Good.

The Walkway suffers from aging mechanical and electrical systems and from some overgrown and missing vegetation. The original wooden seats of the Eckbo benches have been replaced by metal, and some of the rectangular pots are missing. Additional benches have been introduced as a safety barrier along the water channel. Overall, the water sequence, aside from a few missing pieces of ceramic tile, is as installed, although the mechanical systems have failed. All lighting in this segment is original, complete, and fully functional. Overall condition of this segment of the District is Fair.

¹² Contributing structures and sculpture (object) have been keyed to Figure #5 (Veinte de Agosto), Figure #9 (Walkway) and Figure #13 (Fountain Plaza).

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The Fountain Plaza suffers from deteriorated mechanical and electrical systems. While much of the original lighting is still in place, none of the wall lights or in-ground lights are functional. To compensate, various kinds of additional non-contributing lighting have been added. The mechanical systems of the water sequence have failed and some of the basins leak. The original bubbler fountain sited to the northeast of the Arena has been removed and replaced with a sculpture. Many of the original trees remain, although most of the original shrubs are overgrown or missing. In some cases replacement vegetation has not been of the original species. Aside from two benches, original seating has been removed and non-contributing seating introduced. Some original signage remains, but additional non-contributing signage has been added. Some areas of turf have been replaced with decomposed granite. A passage has been cut through the earthen mound that separates the plaza from Church Avenue. Several earthen mounds suffering from erosion have been reinforced by sections of concrete block.

Despite these issues, the great majority of the site remains in good condition. Poured concrete planters are intact, as is most of the irrigation. Terraces and stairways remain as built, in good condition. All the earthen mounds remain in position and retain their original shape; most remain covered with turf. Grids of trees show some missing elements, but the paving patterns have been maintained. The water sequence requires repair but is fundamentally sound and unaltered. Fifty-six original pots remain on site. The plaza continues to be used in a wide range of public events and continues to provide an outdoor gathering space before events and during intermissions. The condition of this segment of the District is Fair.

INTEGRITY

Overall the district retains all seven qualities of Integrity.

[The southwest section of the original Eckbo design, which was extensively modified at the end of the twentieth century when Granada Avenue was rerouted and adjacent parking areas redesigned, does not retain integrity and has not included within the boundary of the TCC Historic District.]

(1) Location

The three sections of the district remain in their original locations.

(2) Design

The original design is extant. The absence of some smaller features and the addition of non-contributing features have not obscured the overall design which is obvious even to the casual visitor. The district within the defined boundary retains integrity of design.

(3) Setting

The immediate surroundings of the landscape have not changed to any great extent. The construction of the United States District Court Building (405 West Congress Street) in 2000 partially blocks the view of the Tucson Mountains from the northwest area of the Fountain Plaza, but important views of the Tucson Mountains and the Cathedral of St. Augustine remain uncompromised. The district retains integrity of setting.

(4) Materials

Except for added objects and structures, the materials of the landscape remain largely unchanged since the period of significance. Vegetation has matured; in some cases, it has not survived. The great majority of trees now on site are those originally planted, and some original shrubs also remain. Some sections of turf have been replaced by decomposed granite and/or river rock, and one original fountain (water feature) has been removed and replaced by a sculpture. The heavy wooden seats of all original benches have been replaced with metal bleacher seats, but the poured concrete footings remain intact. Paving and planter beds are overall unchanged. Overall, the district retains integrity of materials.

(5) Workmanship

The Tucson Community Historic District is an outstanding example of Modern landscape design, installed by a local Tucson contractor (M.M. Sundt) known for quality work. The cascades of boulders, both on the berms and in the

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fountains, were chosen and placed individually on the site by Eckbo. Vegetation was chosen by Eckbo in consultation with Gene Reid,¹³ Tucson's first Parks and Recreation Director, and much of it survives. Lighting was a special interest for Eckbo, and the lighting of the TCC Landscape was installed following his detailed design. Well over half of installed lighting has survived to the present day. The fountains, while in need of renovation, retain their characteristic juxtaposition of concrete slab and natural boulders. The district retains integrity of workmanship.

(6) Feeling

The essential interaction of people and nature espoused by Eckbo in his many books and articles is manifest in this landscape. Mountain and cathedral views, the scent of pines and eucalyptus, the sounds of moving water, the feel of sun and shade, the touch of the wind, and the presence of people moving through the space – all combine to present a physical experience as imagined by the designer. Open space and secluded nooks serve the various and changing needs of individuals in the space. The district retains integrity of feeling.

(7) Association

The landscape embodies in physical form the design philosophy of the Modern landscape architecture movement for which Eckbo spoke. In a more personal way, it embodies Eckbo's own philosophy of public places designed to serve the needs of all members of society by creating an inviting and democratic space for human activity. It also recalls the optimistic spirit of the 1960s and 1970s when cities undertook the creation of new civic amenities focused on cultural, athletic and social activities. The district retains integrity of association.

¹³ Pavillard. "Old Pueblo has a New Heart".

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1971-1974

Significant Dates

1971

1973

1974

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Eckbo, Garrett

Period of Significance (justification)

Period of Significance: 1971-1974 (the period of construction of the district)

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Constructed in three stages in 1971, 1973 and 1974, the TCC Historic District falls under Criteria Consideration G (less than 50 years of age). The landscape is of exceptional importance, deriving its significance from its designer and master landscape architect Garrett Eckbo. As one of only four urban designs created by Eckbo in his long and productive career, it synthesizes the work of two earlier designs (Fresno Mall in 1964 and Union Bank Square 1968), and articulates in physical form the philosophy of Modern landscape design he espoused. Of these three urban works completed within a decade, the TCC Plaza is the most complex, composed of three separate yet linked design sections. It is also the only Eckbo design linked to an urban renewal undertaking involving the demolition of a preexisting neighborhood. Acknowledged as a major work in its own right, its green connective tissue spanning a downtown area foreshadows Eckbo's growing interest in urban and regional planning.¹⁴

The exceptional importance of this landscape has been noted by a number of scholars. Linda Jewell, Professor of Landscape Architecture and Urban Design at the University of California, Berkeley, writes that "this landscape (is) particularly significant for scholars and students since the built work, drawing and correspondence (housed in the Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley) together provide a unique insight into Eckbo's design process."¹⁵ Charles Birnbaum, of the Cultural Landscape Foundation, states that this "landscape embodies Eckbo's design principles and is a keystone in his canon of work . . . This design ranks in the top tier of Modernist work, one of the most significant designed landscape in the American Southwest".¹⁶ Anne-Marie Russell writes that in 2010 the Museum of Contemporary Art arranged for Marc Treib, co-author of the Eckbo monograph, and Laurie Olin, prominent landscape architect, to tour the complex and offer their critical evaluation of the work. Both agreed that the complex is a masterwork of Eckbo's.¹⁷ It has also been featured in recent publications including *Dwell* magazine¹⁸ and *Landscape Architecture Magazine*.¹⁹

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The TCC Historic District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the National Level of Significance under Criterion C as an outstanding example and significant work of a master: landscape architect Garrett Eckbo (1910-2000). One of the leading landscape designers and theorists of the twentieth century, Eckbo spoke for the Modern landscape design movement, formulating in words the conceptual elements and characteristics of the style. Not only was he himself the author of seven major books and over fifty articles, but his writing and constructed work spawned a huge secondary literature in many languages. The TCC Historic District embodies Eckbo's spatial theories as well as his emphasis on the important social role of landscape architecture. It received an honor award from the American Association of Landscape Architects in 1978, and was one of Eckbo's personal favorites, included in the retrospective portfolio of projects in his last published work (1998), *People in a Landscape*²⁰. In recent years its importance has been rediscovered as Modernism has been become recognized as an important historical style. Both the design and the construction are well-documented through plans, photographs and newspaper and verbal descriptions. Completed in two stages in 1971 and 1974, the district falls under Criteria Consideration G (less than 50 years of age). Unique among Eckbo's urban plazas in size and complexity, the TCC Historic District represents the summation of his work in civic design, balanced between a carefully detailed site plan and his developing interest in planning at urban and regional scales. As such, it is of exceptional importance, deriving its significance from its internationally-acclaimed master landscape architect.

¹⁴ Garrett Eckbo et al., *People in a Landscape* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1998).

¹⁵ Linda Jewell, October 20, 2012, Personal Communication to Carol D. Shull.

¹⁶ Charles Birnbaum, October 11, 2012, Personal Communication to Carol D. Shull.

¹⁷ Anne-Marie Russell, May 13, 2013, Personal Communication to Carol D. Shull.

¹⁸ Charles A. Birnbaum, "Landscape Futures," *Dwell* April(2013).

¹⁹ Sam Newberg, "Three for the Register," *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 103, no. 5 (2013), 28.

²⁰ Eckbo et al. *People in a Landscape*.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The TCC Historic District has national significance for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for Landscape Architecture. It was designed by Garrett Eckbo, one of the twentieth century's foremost landscape architects, at the height of his career. Completed in two stages in 1971 and 1974 as part of a joint venture with Tucson architectural firms Cain Nelson Ware and Friedman & Jobusch, the TCC Historic District is the only Eckbo-designed civic space in Arizona and is one of only four civic spaces designed by Eckbo. The other three are Fulton Mall (1964) in Fresno, CA, the Union Bank Square (1968) in Los Angeles, CA, and the K Street Mall in Sacramento, CA (1968-78). Of these four urban projects, the TCC Historic District is the largest and most complex. It also represents Eckbo's only urban renewal project sited in an area reclaimed through neighborhood demolition.

CRITERION C: LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

The TCC Historic District is eligible for the National Register on the national level under Criterion C as a unique capstone work in the career of landscape architect Garrett Eckbo. Created on a unique site, it synthesizes other civic designs undertaken during this brief interlude in his largely residential design career by gathering together the fullness of his design theory in one space.

The TCC Historic District represents the work of a master, Garrett Eckbo (1910-2000), a leading twentieth century pioneer for Modernism and landscape architecture. A prolific writer and educator, his books include *Landscape for Living* (1950), considered to be the single most influential treatise on Modern landscape design.

Eckbo's TCC Historic District is a significant work of American landscape architecture. This modernist landscape perfectly represents Eckbo's "people place" principles: generous space between buildings for group gathering, the use of water as a unifying and animating focal element, and the selection of shade trees from the regional ecological palette. The landscape, one of the largest areas of open space in downtown Tucson, retains integrity to Eckbo's design, transcending axial symmetry through balanced equilibrium within three-dimensional space.

The TCC Historic District is significant as one of a small handful of civic designs produced by this prolific landscape architect and his only example in Arizona. The sloping topography of this site posed unique challenges to Eckbo, unlike the level site of his Union Bank Square and Fulton Mall landscapes. Eckbo incorporated this native topography to great effect in framing view and vistas, creating multisensory experiences for visitors, and enlivening the flow of water throughout the site.²¹ (Stevens 2012).

An early pamphlet circulated by the City of Tucson provides a description of the design intent of the newly-completed Fountain Plaza:

The design for Tucson creates outdoor spaces to be enjoyed by many people during day and night. The paved area of brick and concrete are designed as forecourts for the buildings, usable at intermissions, as sitting areas, for informal and formal gatherings and for exhibitions.

Groves of trees create canopies for shade and shaded walkways . . . Large grass spaces with trees are an alternative to the paving in the Plaza. Pines were planted around the Fremont house for a vertical mass to define the Plaza and frame a view of the mountains to the West. Palm trees were placed as focal elements near the entrances to the Music Hall and Little Theater. Flowering plums were planted for seasonal show and as a contrast to the mulberries, sumac olives and pine trees.

[The] main water feature is a series of cascades at the change of levels between the Little Theater and the Music Hall. Noise of the water has a cooling effect, complementing the grass and pavement, and contrasting with the desert and surrounding city.

²¹ Christopher Stevens, Personal communication to Carol D. Shull, October 24, 2012.

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Water features are all well lighted. In addition, globe lights are used to define main entries, sidewalks, and the forecourt of the Music Hall. Wall lights illuminate steps and ramps, and lights in the pavement softly light selected walls. Flood lights illuminate major tree masses.

The designer points out that the community center (is) intended to be a people place, and that activities and interests change as people become interested in new ideas. The outdoor space (is) designed to accommodate new expressions of ideas.²²

The title of this article, "Landscaping Accentuates 'People Place'", encapsulates Eckbo's overall vision and philosophy. In addition to his position as one of the giants of Modern landscape design, "Eckbo's writings underpinned education and practice for much of the latter part of the twentieth century".²³ What Eckbo wrote, he practiced, and the TCC district reveals many aspects of his thought in concrete form.

Eckbo's books and articles demonstrate his overriding interest in designing places for people. The linked landscapes of the TCC district are not highly choreographed or directive, but rather defer to the varying needs of those individuals who visit. The landscape was intended to multiple uses, in the evening as well as during the day; to provide as a processional area as well as a place to linger and to accommodate both small and large groups. His design intent was to create a plaza that would serve community needs as determined by the people themselves in their own time.

Eckbo, whose foundational treatise *Landscape for Living* was published in 1950, focused on designing "people places." More specifically, this meant creating landscapes that welcomed "all human beings: . . . men, women, babies, children, adolescents, old folks, Negroes, Mexicans, Orientals, 'white Caucasians,' Jews, etc."²⁴ He argued that landscape design was not exterior decoration – the role it had played in the Beaux-Artes design tradition - but rather the organization of outdoor space for the use of people. As a result of this emphasis, the TCC Landscape is a flexible choreographic space which serves multiple populations and functions. As a leisure landscape for strolling and picnicking, it provides areas for children to enjoy the water and run about while families and friends sit together and chat. As a lunchscape for busy office workers, it provides a much-needed mid-day break. As a formal entrance foyer for the Arena, Leo Rich Theater and Concert Hall, it offers an elegant transition to cultural activities and evening performances. As a place for street artists and special events, it serves as a congenial outdoor performance and exhibit space. As green space in the city, it offers respite from the surrounding desert heat.

This landscape embodies democratic values. Unlike earlier Beaux-Artes landscapes created to be seen from one specific viewpoint, the TCC district intentionally provides multiple perspectives. These are not designed to enhance the position of a single powerful individual, or to project a sense of awe, but rather to provide a range of inclusive experience for all visitors.

One of the reasons that Eckbo's work is less likely to be circulated in photographic essays than, for example, the work of his contemporary Lawrence Halprin, is that he did not design dominating central features.

Photographs fail to convey an accurate impression – for Eckbo's work lacks the striking one-point perspectives so beloved of design magazines. . . . his designs are not facades but be experienced within as a spatial continuum in their specific regional context. Today's younger generation of designers sometime speak as if they had rediscovered contextualism via "site-specific" environmental art. Eckbo, in his emphasis on climatic regionalism, never departed from contextualism.²⁵

²² "Landscaping Accentuated 'People Place'," *Tucson Community Center Happenings* 4 (1971), 4.

²³ Simon Swaffield, *Theory in Landscape Architecture: A Reader* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), xi.

²⁴ Garrett Eckbo, *Landscape for Living* (New York: Architectural Record with Duell, Sloan, & Pearce, 1950), 29.

²⁵ Reuben M. Rainey, "Garrett Eckbo's Landscape for Living," in *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, ed. Marc Treib (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 204.

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In this way Eckbo's work differs from most of the designs of his contemporaries. Sometimes dubbed the "landscape architect of the people", he did not for the most part create major focal points through his designs.²⁶ Instead he was providing the context for visitors to enjoy the landscape according to their own wishes and needs. The three linked design areas of the TCC Historic District also point forward towards Eckbo's developing interest in city and regional planning. Thus this landscape can also be seen as a transitional work. In fact, the Honor Award from the American Association of Landscape Architects mentions that the project "should have been entered in the urban design category".²⁷ In its scale, the TCC Landscape is unique among Eckbo's four major civic designs, because the Fulton Mall, the K Street Mall, and the Union Bank Square are single-unit designs.

BIOGRAPHY OF GARRETT ECKBO

Garrett Eckbo was born in Cooperstown, New York, in 1910, 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. Eckbo's contact with Gropius and the principles he espoused encouraged him to see things from a populist perspective, a focus he would maintain lifelong. After graduating, Eckbo spent several years working for the Farm Security Administration, designing facilities for farm workers in California and Arizona, an experience that confirmed his belief that "what was good for the rich was good for the poor (Imbert 2009:85).²⁸ 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. *Landscape for Living*, first published in 1950, remains in print today and suggests that his influence may extend well into the future. In 1975 he received the Medal of Honor from the American Association of Landscape Architects for his contributions to the profession. 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. He continued to work until the year before his death in 2000.²⁹

One of the finest landscape architects of the twentieth century, Eckbo led the rebellion against the formal and decorative Beaux-Artes tradition that dominated landscape practice at the beginning of the twentieth century.³⁰ While studying at Harvard, he and fellow landscape architecture students Dan Kiley and James Rose fell under the influence of Walter Gropius, and soon published three articles in *Pencil Points*, a leading publication in progressive architecture. Eckbo went on to become the acknowledged theorist and spokesperson for the Modern landscape movement, writing seven major books and over fifty articles outlining the principles of his work. His book *Landscape for Living* (1950) is considered to be the single most influential treatise on Modern landscape design.³¹ 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 drew from characteristics of site, climate, materials and cultural needs. People were recognized not only as cultural individuals and groups, but as members of local, national and world societies. Design was to be imaginative, yet socially and environmentally responsible. The role of tradition was to provide inspiration and a benchmark for achievement.³² The work of visual artists

²⁶ The large fountain at the Denver Botanic Garden is an exception.

²⁷ American Society of Landscape Architects, "Tucson Community Center: Honor Award," *Landscape Architecture* 68 (July 1978), 300.

²⁸ Dorothee Imbert, "Garrett Eckbo," in *Shaping the American Landscape*, edited by Charles Birnbaum and Stephanie S. Foell (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2000).

²⁹ Marc Treib and Dorothee Imbert, *Garrett Eckbo: Modern Landscapes for Living* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997); Marc Treib, "Looking Forward to Nature - an Appreciation of Garrett Eckbo, 1910-2000," *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 90, no. 12 (2000).

³⁰ Imbert, "Garrett Eckbo", 85-87.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

³² Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, 10-11.

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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.³³

Modern landscape architecture 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. Along with the general principles of Modernism that sprang from the “Harvard Revolution”, Eckbo emphasized the idea that experiential factors – sight, sound, smell, touch, overall feeling, psychological reaction – are as important as economic, technical, and functional factors.³⁴ He further believed that continuous and substantial contact with nature is essential to a healthy design. He stressed that every designed landscape should respond to the needs of people who are 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 design palette focused on the use of climate-adapted plants.

Eckbo received numerous awards throughout his long career. Among these were American Institute of Architects Merit Award (1953); membership in the National Academy of Design (1964); the American Society of Landscape Architects Medal of Honor (1975); and the University of California College of Environmental Design Distinguished Alumnus Award (1998).

URBAN RENEWAL: THE CONTEXT OF THE TCC HISTORIC DISTRICT (Figure #2)

From the 1930s onward American central cities fell victim to a range of circumstances that led to their abandonment in favor of the rising suburbs. One of the leading causes was the increasing availability of the automobile and the passage of the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956, which made it possible for people to leave the city's older building stock and density for the growing suburbs. After World War II mortgages subsidized by the Federal Government encouraged an even greater number of city residents to depart, leaving the outdated central city to new immigrants, the elderly and the impoverished. Many of these residents were people of color.³⁵

During the 1930s a general consensus was reached by city planners across the country that the way to revitalize the central city was through physical renewal, meaning an updated infrastructure, good highways and parking, and upgraded amenities to serve the middle class. World War II interrupted the implementation of such plans, but the direction of impending renewal was set. The Housing Act of 1937 dedicated funding to the combination of slum clearance and new low-rent public housing construction.³⁶

Two additional Acts of Congress in 1947 and 1949 expanded the program of slum clearance, and in 1949, for the first time, land areas cleared with Federal aid could be sold or leased to private developers for residential development.³⁷

In 1953 President Eisenhower formed a special committee on Government Housing Policies and Programs, which concluded that Federal assistance should be limited to communities willing to undertake long range-planning to avoid slum creation, including enforcement of building codes. Recommendations from this study were incorporated into the Housing Act of 1954, which emphasized comprehensive planning for urban areas. Additional housing acts in 1959 and 1961 increased Federal support and emphasized planning based on capital financing and land economics.³⁸

The story of urban renewal in Tucson followed a pattern similar to that of the rest of the country, but unlike other cities which had seen relatively large recent in-migrations from poorer and rural areas, central Tucson had a large population of Mexicans, Chinese and native Americans whose ethnic and cultural roots antedated the arrival of the Anglo population in the nineteenth century. The Gadsden Purchase that transformed Tucson from a Mexican city to an American city took

³³ Treib and Imbert, *Garrett Eckbo: Modern Landscapes for Living*, 61.

³⁴ Garrett Eckbo, *Public Landscape: Six Essays on Government and Environmental Design in the San Francisco Bay Area* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, 1978), 7.

³⁵ Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 4-7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25-43.

³⁷ Alfred P. Van Huyck and Jack Hornung, *The Citizen's Guide to Urban Renewal* (West Trenton, NJ: Chandler-Davis Publishing Company, 1962), 149-51.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 150-51.

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place in 1854, but Tucson remained a largely Mexican town until the coming of the railroad in 1880. The subsequent influx of Anglo settlers changed the ethnic balance in a dramatic way.

By the 1930s the business community was dominated by Anglos, among them real estate broker Roy P. Drachman (1906-2000), who would become one of the largest supporters of urban renewal in Tucson. In response to the Federal Housing Act of 1937, the Tucson Chamber of Commerce (of which Drachman was the Director) appointed a committee to back the passage of an enabling bill through the state legislature and to undertake the support of feasibility research on the potential for urban renewal, but little progress was made until 1942, when the City of Tucson and Pima County joined with a group of business leaders to commission Ladislav Segoe, a planner from Cincinnati, to collaborate with City of Tucson planner Andre Faure to produce a document entitled *Tucson Regional Plan, Inc.: Ten Year Improvement Program for Tucson and Environs*.³⁹ In this plan Segoe recommended that the Old Pueblo area – especially the area around Meyer Street where the Community Center stands today - be the first priority in renewal efforts.⁴⁰

Once again things did not move forward, but in the early 1950s Faure, now City Planning Director, proposed three areas of Tucson for renewal, one of which was the Old Pueblo District.⁴¹ In 1955 Don Hummel, who had supported the state enabling legislation almost twenty years before, became mayor of Tucson. Under his leadership, the City received Federal approval and funding for developing a survey and plan for renewal of the Old Pueblo District (Ibid: 34). This work took several years, and it was only in 1961 that a document entitled *Urban renewal: a teamwork of private enterprise and government for slum clearance and redevelopment of the Old Pueblo District, Tucson, Arizona*, was completed by S.L. Schorr, then the City of Tucson Urban Renewal Director. This plan proposed the redevelopment of 392 acres, an area eventually whittled down to 76.4 acres.⁴² Still, this plan was rejected by Mayor and Council. Again a delay followed until 1965, when Donald Laidlaw and Vincent Lung of the City completed a Survey and Planning Application to the Urban Renewal Administration for approval. This was approved in record time in spring 1965.

A Committee on Municipal Blight was immediately established under the chairmanship of Roy Drachman to prepare a planning document for the project. This resulted in *A Concept Plan: Pueblo Center Project/Tucson/Arizona*.

The Pueblo Center project offers the community an opportunity to transform a portion of the Downtown area immediately adjacent to the Business District from a state of run-down buildings, inadequate streets and marginal business and residential uses into a vital area containing needed government facilities, business uses, and a community center for meetings, performances and exhibits. . . . The project also provides a chance to improve the street pattern for the whole Downtown area, to provide parking facilities, and to develop landscaped spaces for public enjoyment.⁴³

In November a condensed version of this plan entitled *The Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project* co-authored by Drachman and Lung was accepted by Mayor and Council. A bond election in March 1966 provided the financial basis for proceeding.⁴⁴

The urban renewal area was intended to serve as an enhancement for the central business district, which lay to the northeast. It was believed at that time that a civic / government center and a cultural center would draw the middle class back to the downtown area, taking advantage of the huge Anglo population influx into Tucson which followed World War II.⁴⁵

³⁹ Ladislav Segoe, "Tucson Regional Plan, Inc. Ten Year Improvement Program for Tucson and Environs" (Tucson, AZ: Prepared for the Tucson Regional Plan, Inc., 1942).

⁴⁰ Rachel Stein Gragg, "Tucson: The Formulation and Legitimation of an Urban Renewal Program" (University of Arizona, MA paper, 1969), 27-29.

⁴¹ Ibid., 30.

⁴² Ibid., 41.

⁴³ Candeub, Fleissig, Adley and Associates, *Pueblo Center Project, Tucson, Arizona: Concept Plan*, (Tucson, AZ: Department of Community Development, City of Tucson, 1965), 1.

⁴⁴ Gragg, "Tucson: The Formulation and Legitimation of an Urban Renewal Program," 49-51.

⁴⁵ Vincent L. Lung and Roy Drachman, Tucson Citizens Committee on Municipal Blight, *The Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project: Report Presented to the Central City Council of the Urban Land Institute, April 23, 1965 by Roy Drachman, Chairman, Citizens Committee on Municipal Blight and Vincent L. Lung, Assistant City Manager and Coordinator of Community*

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In retrospect it is clear that a powerful Anglo business elite, holding a vision of Tucson as an exciting modern city, had little sympathy for or understanding of the long-established culture of the area to be impacted by urban renewal. Focused on tourism and economic development, their goal was to remove the long-established Barrio community from the central city. As the years dragged on, civic as well as private neglect had led to a deteriorated housing stock in the project area, as there was no financial incentive for upgrading basic services such as plumbing or electricity. Even those citizens concerned with historic preservation were unable to influence the eventual result of bulldozing the greater part of the area to make space for new construction.⁴⁶

Shortly after the 1966 bond election, the city began to acquire the necessary property for the proposed project. Only fifty acres of the eighty-acre site had to be acquired, the rest being made up of streets. Demolition began in May 1967.⁴⁷ By 1969, the entire area had been cleared and the government center completed. The community center was the last area to be developed.

ECKBO'S TUCSON COMMUNITY CENTER COMMISSION

An informational pamphlet, *Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project, 1967-1969* set forth the goals for the project's landscape:

Careful attention will be paid to details of interplay between light and shade, paving textures, landscaping, flow of water, and vistas created within the project. . . . a meaningful aesthetic experience for the citizens of Tucson.⁴⁸

Anglo Tucsonans of the 1950s and 60s wanted Tucson to have a public space that would represent the city as a thriving, modern community. As was the case with many other cities of the time, much study went into developing the new downtown area. In Tucson, plans for a "pueblo center" were debated for several decades before demolition of old neighborhoods and new construction began. In the end, not only were buildings bulldozed but entire streets were abandoned or rerouted

Two local architectural firms undertook the design of the Tucson Community Center as a joint venture: Cain Nelson Ware and Friedman & Jobusch. Edward 'Ned' Nelson headed the project. M.M. Sundt, a local contractor, did the construction. Nelson, along with Bernard Friedman and Donald Laidlaw (then Tucson's Urban Renewal Administrator), interviewed a number of the most prominent landscape architects in the country to complete this team. Among them were Lawrence Halprin, Dan Kiley (who had designed the landscape for Lincoln Center in New York City) and Garrett Eckbo.⁴⁹ It was a visit to the Fulton Mall in Fresno, CA, that convinced the group that Eckbo was the right choice for Tucson's needs. A contemporary account in the *Tucson Daily Citizen* recounts,

We went to Fresno, Nelson recalls. And we watched the people – winos, housewives, oldsters, kids – walking, talking, arguing, laughing. The children played in the pools. These were just great spaces . . . and we asked ourselves, "Why can't we combine the idea of an open-air mall with a community center?"⁵⁰

The project was completed in two stages. Veinte de Agosto Park and the Fountain Plaza were completed in 1971, and the Walkway was completed in 1974 after the construction of the hotel and the office/shopping/restaurant complex. The construction was done by Sundt Construction, who include it in their 2011 portfolio of selected projects.⁵¹

Development (Tucson, AZ: City of Tucson, 1965).

⁴⁶ Lydia R. Otero, *La Calle: Spatial Conflicts and Urban Renewal in a Southwest City* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2010).

⁴⁷ Bonnie Newlon, *Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project, 1967-1969* (Tucson, AZ: City of Tucson, Department of Community Development, Urban Renewal Division, 1968), 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁹ Edward Nelson, May 5, 2012. Interview with Helen Erickson.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Pavillard. "Old Pueblo has a New Heart".

⁵¹ Archie Satterfield and Charles A. Boyde, *Building Integrity since 1890: The Remarkable History of Sundt Construction*, (The Sundt Companies, Inc., 2011).

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The Fountain Plaza was officially opened on November 6, 1971. Over a thousand persons attended the ceremony. Mayor James N. Corbett spoke, saying: "This center is the embodiment of the new Tucson – an understanding of the heritage and peoples of the past and a recognition that the people of this community have dedicated themselves to better opportunities for everyone."⁵²

The hotel was completed in 1973 and formally opened on November 28, 1973. Photographs from that date reveal that the Walkway was not yet installed.⁵³ Although apparently there was no formal opening celebration for this segment of the district, the Walkway appears complete in photographs at the time of the formal opening of the office/shopping/restaurant complex on May 3, 1974.⁵⁴ Veinte de Agosto Park, on the other hand, appears in 1973 photographs (Figure #7), but it was not officially recognized until it was dedicated as a public park on August 20, 1978.⁵⁵ City of Tucson Construction drawings from the early 1970s label it as 'Eckbow Park'.

In 1978 The Tucson Community Center received the Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects. Jury comments read:

A very challenging assignment. Exciting use of materials and establishment of a number and variety of vistas in essentially an urban setting with excellent use of water. A very urbane typing together of major activity centers. Really lovely. Interesting use of fountains. Very dynamic kind of setting – different uses, different levels, different vistas. Very sophisticated. There is ample shade. A very difficult assignment in having to work in very serious constraints. Excellent!⁵⁶

ECKBO'S DESIGN THEORY AS REPESENTED IN THE TCC HISTORIC DISTRICT

As the spokesman for Modern landscape design, Eckbo described in words what he demonstrated in his designs. Beyond his primary emphasis on designing for the needs of people, he considered three other forces – history, nature and architecture - to have a major role in the design process.⁵⁷

In the Fountain Plaza, framed views of the Tucson Mountains to the west and to the historic Cathedral of St. Augustine to the east provide a link between nature and history. In Veinte de Agosto Park the surrounding civic and office buildings are linked to the view of the Tucson Mountains, framed by giant *Pinus halepensis* (Aleppo pine). Eckbo defines these views as landmarks: "People orient themselves in the physical world much more simply and naturally by relation to landmarks than by such intellectual abstractions as verbal directions, signs, or maps".⁵⁸ Such landmarks include both natural and constructed features. They are indeed an orienting presence in the district.

The historic context of the site as one of the oldest areas of settlement in Tucson and as the former center of Tucson's Mexican-American community was not ignored in the design. In project presentations to the community Eckbo made reference to Chapultepec Park in Mexico City as an influence on the design of the fountains.⁵⁹ In portfolio descriptions of the TCC project he regularly mentioned the adjacency of historic houses rescued from the demolition of the Barrio.⁶⁰ Eckbo's original design had included an additional fountain to provide a dramatic setting for the Sosa-Carrillo-Fremont house, but due to reduced funding this was never built. Yet even in the completed project an arc of differentiated paving (sometimes referred to as a "dry wash") directs the eye to the historic house.

Eckbo defined nature as the inextricable world of forces and processes within which we live and work, including climate, vegetation, soil, topography and water movement. He wrote that the true role of landscape design is "the establishment of connections, relations, and adjustments, both physical and visual, between buildings, sites, and their surrounding

⁵² Quoted in David Nix "Formal Dedication Held for Community Center," *Arizona Daily Star*. November 7, 1971.

⁵³ "Braniff Place Completed," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, November 28, 1973, 2.

⁵⁴ "'Mexican Village' Open to Public."

⁵⁵ "A Park for Pancho."

⁵⁶ American Society of Landscape Architects, "Tucson Community Center: Honor Award," 300.

⁵⁷ Garrett Eckbo, *Urban Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 62.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵⁹ Ceci Garcia, Interview with Helen Erickson, June 26, 2012.

⁶⁰ For example, see Eckbo et al., *People in a Landscape*, 200.

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landscapes, that is, between people and the total landscape around them".⁶¹ Landscape has no boundaries save those where man leaves off changing the landscape.⁶² In the design of the TCC Landscape, this includes the provision of links between people and nature at many scales, from the Tucson Mountain views, to the now-gigantic pines on the western side of the landscape, to the mid-sized sumacs and shrubs, to the grassy mounds that invite sitting. He drew from the interpretations of anthropologists who designated "savannah" as the most congenial landscape for human beings, with an open surface of grassland with a sprinkling of covering shelter provided by mid-sized trees, and views within and beyond the site.⁶³ Along with this is the association with water. The design drew into the city a vision of Sabino Canyon, a much-loved area of the Coronado National Forest located in the Santa Catalina Mountains just north of Tucson. The concept of a mountain stream flowing through washes and canyons cannot be missed. Although the boulders that tumble down the berms and interrupt the flow of water in the fountains are most likely of volcanic origin from the Tucson Mountains, they underscore this connection to the surrounding landscape.⁶⁴

For Eckbo, architecture and the landscape existed in a state of constant reciprocity: landscape providing site and setting, inspiration, discipline and responsibility; and architecture providing imaginative spatial concepts with unavoidable effects upon the form and character of the surrounding landscape.⁶⁵ Every building set in the Fountain Plaza is surrounded by a reciprocal transitional zone, a space of interaction between building and landscape. The Leo Rich Theater features an outdoor reception balcony planted with *Brachychiton populneus* (bottle tree), but set off from the plaza with a pony wall. It is difficult to say for certain whether this is part of the building or part of the plaza. The Arena's arcade creates a physical connection between indoor and outdoor space, but beyond that planting terraces stepping down to the plaza level blur the boundary between building and plaza. Large planting boxes and planting terraces on the north and south sides of the Music Hall serve the same function, and the glass façade on the east side of the Music Hall alternately provides a transparent link between interior and exterior or reflects the plaza back into itself, blurring the lines between lobby and plaza. Eckbo's lighting design took advantage of this by echoing the design of the lobby chandeliers in the pole lights just outside the Music Hall entrance. The Walkway, likewise, was designed to provide an indoor/outdoor corridor, sheltered by an overstory of trees, with windows and passageways reaching into the built spaces surrounding it, while using interior lighting to provide added illumination to the exterior area.

Throughout his writings Eckbo emphasized the importance of trees in the landscape.

Trees, rather than architecture, are the best measure of the civilized landscape. A community in which many mature trees survive and more are planted regularly demonstrates a sense of time, history and continuity on the land . . .⁶⁶

Today the TCC Landscape reveals dozens of mature trees, an amazing heritage for a desert community. From the *eucalyptus sp.* (eucalyptus) that punctuate the arc of the eastern Fountain Plaza, to the *Pinus canariensis* (Canary Island pine) and *Pinus halepensis* (Aleppo pine) of the Veinte de Agosto Park and western Fountain Plaza, to the spreading *Rhus lancea* (African sumac) in the central Fountain Plaza, to the *Plantanus wrightii* (Arizona sycamore) in the Walkway, to the grove of *Olea europea* (olive) in the balcony terrace on the northern side of the Arena, this entire landscape serves as an arboretum. Historic photographs indicate that these trees have grown from the original saplings planted on the site, a living link between historic past and potential future.

The presence of the surrounding buildings is not ignored in this design. Eckbo saw architecture as the primary expression of human imagination within the landscape, the link between abstract conception and concrete reality.⁶⁷ Along Church Avenue, berms serve as pedestals for showcasing the Arena. From the upper Fountain Plaza, traffic and parked cars are concealed to provide an uninterrupted view of the Cathedral. In the northern segment of the design, the berms of Veinte de Agosto Park provide a similar foundation for viewing the government buildings of the civic center.

⁶¹ Eckbo, *Urban Landscape Design*, 62.

⁶² Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, 31.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁶⁴ Pavillard, "Old Pueblo has a New Heart".

⁶⁵ Garrett Eckbo, "Landscape Continuity," *Image* 3, no. 1 (1965): 77.

⁶⁶ Garrett Eckbo, "Metropolitan Design, Form and Content in Urban Areas." *Annual Meeting of the American Institute of Planners: a Report of the Proceedings*, 1959, 137.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

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Eckbo understood that space in a landscape is perceived very differently from architectural space. “Gardens and landscapes in general are apprehended only from within themselves; they do not have the outside walls or façades which make it possible to walk around most buildings, however modern, and view them as objects, more or less sculptural, in the landscape”.⁶⁸ Modern landscapes must be thought of as three-dimensional, dynamic spaces rather than as two-dimensional forms outlined on paper. The provision of enclosure – control of views, protection from sun, wind or rain, privacy or openness - is an essential element in spatial experience of landscape.⁶⁹ The TCC landscape provides large, open spaces, and quiet, intimate conversation areas – flows and eddies – pathways and byways. The landscape is never static, yet always in balance, continually changing to accommodate the visitor. Eckbo’s intent was to offer “a continuous experience for each and every human being . . . from a stationary position, or while in motion at any speed”.⁷⁰ The downward slope of the terrain towards the west in the Fountain Plaza or Veinte de Agosto Park is interrupted with walls or vegetation to constrict or widen the view as a person moves through the space. The illusion of slope from north to south in the Walkway is created by the variable widths of water channels, although the area is essentially flat. Trees overhead obscure the sky, open plazas reveal and celebrate it.

For Eckbo, landscape was a multisensory experience defined by touch, smell and hearing as well as vision.⁷¹ In the TCC landscape, the flickering of sun and shade, a pine-scented breeze, the cool touch of water and the soundscape of fountains, the softness of turf, the contrast between brick and concrete paving underfoot – all these contribute to a complete experience of the space.

Eckbo was fascinated by the concept of dynamic equilibrium as conveyed in the paintings of Joan Miró, Vassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee. Following the lead of these artists, Eckbo’s mature works relied on circles as places of rest and as the source or terminus of lines, the trace of a pendulum.⁷² The circles and rays emanating from the center of the section of the plaza near the northeast corner of the Arena and from the Leo Rich Theater demonstrate this on the ground plane, as do the repetitive grids throughout the Fountain Plaza. But Eckbo’s sense of dynamic equilibrium moves beyond patterns on the ground to three-dimensional space. An example of this is found in the allée that parallels Church Avenue in the northeast corner of the Fountain Plaza. An analysis of this apparently traditional form reveals a planting of *Rhus lancea* (African sumac) on each side of the walkway; but on the east side the trees are planted into a sequence of rectangular pavement openings to form a gridded line, while on the west side the trees are planted onto a sinuous grassy berm. The effect achieved is a moment of balance.

A similar dynamic balance is seen in the Walkway with the asymmetrical position of the water channel, set to the west of center. Large *Rhus lancea* (African sumac) and *Plantanus wrightii* (Arizona sycamore) are intended to be held in check by the line of smaller trees in the gridded planters on the eastern side of the corridor. Pedestrians walking along the eastern side of the corridor provide a dynamic balance to the weight of the water feature and larger trees to the west. Both the allée and the Walkway demonstrate Eckbo’s vision of creating a landscape largely composed of straight lines, but without axial symmetry. This he deemed to be “interesting, stable and restful without being dull or monotonous”.⁷³

In both small and large ways he demonstrated complex relationships between lines and curves, seeing this as human “vision in motion”.⁷⁴ In Veinte de Agosto Park, the fountain begins with a regular octagonal basin from which water flows through angularly placed linear channels into semicircular or arc-based collection basins. These basins in turn lead the eye to the bermed wash angling off to the southwest towards the stairway to the office/shopping/restaurant complex. In the central Fountain Plaza, the circular terraces interrupted by angular battered walls, across from the Music Hall to the east, offer another example of this interactive juxtaposition of elements.

⁶⁸ Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, 63.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

⁷⁰ Garrett Eckbo. *The Landscape We See* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 136.

⁷¹ Eckbo, *Public Landscape*, 7.

⁷² Treib and Imbert, *Garrett Eckbo: Modern Landscapes for Living*, 61-62.

⁷³ Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, 67.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

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ECKBO'S USE OF MATERIALS IN THE TCC HISTORIC DISTRICT

One of the characteristic features of Eckbo's work was his choice of materials, a matter to which he devotes considerable emphasis in his writings. He outlined three general principles with regard to their use:

- Materials must express their own inborn characteristics. By this he meant that bricks are modular units, the effect of which is built up by repetition and combination. Concrete is a plastic material whose shape and volume can be flexibly defined. A plant is alive, requiring appropriate provision for its individual development. The materials that comprise the TCC District reflect this understanding. Brick is used as modular units to define sections of pavement or, as in the Walkway and Fountain Plaza, to define the grids of trees. Concrete is used for both curved and linear constructs, for walls, paving and mowing strips. In the Walkway, it appears as stamped segments of pavement. In the Fountain Plaza it is used to form curved, battered walls of in-ground planters. Brick does not masquerade as concrete, and concrete is not to be used as a substitute for brick. Plants are permitted to grow interactively with their environment and are not shaped and pruned into static geometric forms. The bending forms of the *Rhus lancea* (African sumac) trees or the twisted stem of the *Chamaerops humilis* (Mediterranean fan palm) now on site would undoubtedly please Eckbo.
- Materials have character only in relation to other materials. The contrast between smooth and plastic elements and those of a rougher character brings out the character of each.⁷⁵ In the TCC district, the best example may be the contrast between unformed water and the rigidity of concrete. Other examples are the contrast between turfed mounds and the natural volcanic rocks that tumble down the slopes, or between turf and linear concrete mowing strips.
- Materials are used not for their own sake, but to organize space for people to use. This circles back to Eckbo's fundamental design concept of creating places for people and on his emphasis on difference between "pure" art and the use of materials in landscapes. The use of materials in the TCC landscape is never simply decorative, but always supports the overall goal of designing for people. Walkways are there to be walked, trees offer screening and shade, grassy berms encourage sitting.⁷⁶

Eckbo's emphasis on selecting vegetation that did not require shaping or regular pruning, but was rather to be permitted to grow and develop over time according to its character⁷⁷ is yet another example of his use of dynamic equilibrium in this landscape. Eckbo argued for small areas of grass to provide surfaces for informal sitting and for the reduction of heat, glare, dust and noise.⁷⁸ In the Fountain Plaza and in Veinte de Agosto Park, grassy mounds offer a cool, relaxed place to sit – and it is rare not to see groups gathered on the grass in Veinte de Agosto Park or in the Fountain Plaza. He argued that trees are the basic tools for establishing scale relations between people and landscapes of all sizes, between an individual and the world around.⁷⁹ Medium-sized trees provide intimate shade, while larger trees such as the *Pinus canariensis* (Canary Island pine) and *Pinus halepensis* (Aleppo pine) frame views of the mountains. Deciduous trees like *Plantanus wrightii* (Arizona sycamore) and *Morus sp.* (mulberry) mark the seasons in warmer climates⁸⁰ and provide landscape variation throughout the year.

A 1971 newspaper account states that

“working with Gene Reid, Head of Tucson's Parks and Recreation Department, Eckbo was able to employ many of the plants native or adapted to Tucson – fan palms, mulberry, sumac, Texas ranger, dark leaf plum, olive, pine, etc. – and to start with larger plants than the budget would have permitted had it not been for Reid's cooperation in tapping the city's well-stocked nursery”.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Ibid., 76-78.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 96.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 107-08.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 111.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 99.

⁸¹ Pavillard, “Old Pueblo has a New Heart”.

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His major criterion for plant selection was to choose vegetation that would grow well in a specific location with available care; vegetation should have room to grow to full size without persistent pruning or trimming.⁸² For Eckbo, site-adapted plants were the backbone of his planting design, and he chose vegetation based on this criterion. He did not feel that plant palettes should be restricted to native plants.⁸³ This explains his choice of *Rhus lancea* (African sumac) and *Syagrus romanzoffiana* (queen palm) - drought-resistant, long-lived trees in most areas of the site. In fact the tree palette of the TCC Historic District includes no native plants other than the *Plantanus wrightii* (Arizona sycamore) in the Walkway. Original shrubs were Mediterranean and Asian in origin, although few of these survive other than a few scattered *Oleander nerium* (oleander), *Chamaerops humilis* (Mediterranean fan palm), *Buxus microphylla*. (Japanese boxwood), *Pittisporum t. variegata* (variegated pittisporum), *Podocarpus gracilor* (fern pine) and *Jasminus mesneyi* (primrose jasmine). Nothing in his planting plan is drawn from the Sonoran Desert (his most native plant choice - *Leucophyllum frutescens* or Texas ranger - is native to the Chihuahuan Desert). His goal was to select those plants that would grow best in any specific location, and he had little patience for those who wished to limit a plant palette to those growing in an area before a specific date. Instead he pointed out that the on-going relationship between people and plants has led to a not-to-be-ignored cultural whole.⁸⁴

Because the TCC landscape was planned as a space for both day and evening use, lighting was an important aspect of the design. Ideas that seem commonplace now were exciting and innovative when first introduced by Eckbo. The silhouetting of trees and shrubs, light passing through glass and water, the creation of a stage set while yet providing functional light where it is needed – all these were discussed in Eckbo's writings.⁸⁵ The lighting design for the Walkway intentionally drew on lights emanating from the surrounding hotel and office/shopping/restaurant complex to supplement the globe lamps on poles. Here all original light fixtures remain, revealing a sophisticated plan with two-globe fixtures illuminating the pathway, four-globe fixtures illuminating intersections and single-globe features illuminating corners of the site. Lighting in the Fountain Plaza included wall lights, in-ground spot lights, floodlights and globe lights on poles, providing surface light for practical reasons and globe lights as a dramatic feature and guide through the space. Even now, with missing fixtures in the Fountain Plaza (especially those placed to illuminate the ground plane or water features), enough of the original plan remains to provide an good idea of the design intent. A historic photograph of the Music Hall at night gives an idea of the intended effect (Figure #19).

THE USE OF WATER FEATURES IN THE TCC HISTORIC DISTRICT

For Eckbo, water was one of the fundamental materials of landscape design, along with ground forms, rocks and plants. Water is the most plastic of design elements, its character determined by its container and by the rate and direction of movement given to it. In more arid climates water is particularly relevant because of its importance for comfort and life, and in these climates it should be used sparingly and in such a way to gain maximum coolness and moistness from every drop. "In Arizona water is the final touch which makes the garden liveable."⁸⁶

Depending on the design of the container, water can provide quietude, repose, depth, tension, solidity and sparkling or luminous reflection. Water affords choreographic possibilities, accompanied by trickling, silent or thunderous sound. It transforms the character of materials with which it comes in contact.⁸⁷ Eckbo comments that "design of pools seems still to be dominated by the peculiar idea that irregular pools must be naturalistic and regular pools axially symmetric. . . . (but) the rectangularity of the unit-masonry pool can be a free and irregular rectangularity, and angular or circular relations at appropriate scale can be come part of this".⁸⁸

All three design areas of the TCC Historic District contain water sequences composed of rectangular or arc-derived geometric units of channels and basins. In Veinte de Agosto Park the fountain emerges as a bubbler in an octagonal basin. From this water flows in channels tangentially adjacent to a stairway to collect in two sequential basins derived from portions of geometric arcs. In the Walkway an initial semicircular basin and bubbler leads to a sequence of

⁸² Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, 112.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 34, 105-06.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, *Landscape for Living*, 125.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

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rectangular channels to achieve the effect of an irregular stream. At the end of the series, water flows down the sides of elongated concrete cubes, transforming this material into flashes of daytime silver or nighttime gold. The linked basins in the Fountain Plaza reveal water at its most plastic, sometimes lying quiet and reflective, sometimes pouring over concrete walls or washing around natural volcanic boulders in its path. Eckbo's fountains create a soundscape of varied intensity in different sections of the site, so that taking a walk through the space is an acoustic delight.

POST-CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

The completed design lived up to the hopes expressed by Nelson and Friedman. Early photographs show people walking, lunching, reading and playing in the water. Within a few years, however, liability anxiety set in, and Eckbo found himself pushing back against those who felt that the open water features created a safety problem requiring barricades. He wrote:

"There may be absolute safety – in bed in a fireproof building? – and absolute danger – tied to a railroad track. But most situations lie between such extremes. Physical situation should be made reasonably safe, without obvious or unnecessary hazards. But we also expect people to exercise normal care in finding their way through the physical world."⁸⁹

Yet by 1977 no solution had been found.

The sparkling ponds of water in the Tucson Community Center complex are an irresistible magnet for kids on hot summer days. That worries the Community Center Commission, which is searching for ways to make the ponds off limits for swimming. What's cool fun for kids becomes a vision of accidents, injuries and damage suits for the grownup members of the commission. So, at its monthly meeting yesterday, the commission decided to start thinking of ways to prevent kids from using the two fountain pools near the center's music hall for ad hoc swimming holes.⁹⁰

As with other Modern landscape designs including water features, this discussion continues today. Appropriate solutions have not yet been determined.

Another unanticipated outcome was the symbolism assigned to the entire community center project by those whose neighborhood had been destroyed by Tucson's urban renewal undertaking.

For many of Tucson's most deeply rooted residents, the Community Center, bland as it may be architecturally, now stands as a hated reminder of arrogant and uncaring officialdom. "People's grandmothers died because of those buildings," complains Pedro Gonzales. . . .⁹¹

It may be that the man who designed landscapes for migrant housing was uncomfortable with the social cost of urban renewal projects. Even before planning for the TCC Landscape was completed, Eckbo went on record as opposed to the completion of the Butterfield Freeway, which would have required further neighborhood demolition just to the south:

Really, there is no apparent reason to me why the city has to be cut up with such a monstrous system of freeways . . . an apparently arbitrary plan. I see no reason to hack up the city with such a system when through traffic could stay to the outskirts of the city.⁹²

For whatever reason, the TCC Landscape is the only urban renewal project Eckbo ever undertook. After the completion of this commission, his focus turned towards planning. While he continued to work on residential projects, his public design work centered on college campuses rather than urban spaces.

⁸⁹ Quoted in "Sole-Talk Centering on Downtown Pond," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, December 5, 1974.

⁹⁰ Quoted in "In the Swim? Not Community Center," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, October 21, 1977.

⁹¹ Quoted in Dan Huff and Dave Devine, "Grassroots Golliath . . . The Pima County Interfaith Council prepares to Tackle Big Problems in the Old Pueblo . . . Are They Tough Enough?" *Tucson Weekly*, October 17, 1996.

⁹² "Civic Center Architect Blasts Freeway Plans," *Tucson Daily Citizen*. March 29, 1968.

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THE TCC HISTORIC DISTRICT WITHIN THE CANON OF ECKBO'S WORK

After he graduated from Harvard, Eckbo went to work for the Farm Security Administration in 1938. This program was a New Deal project created to alleviate rural poverty during the Great Depression. The Western Office, for which Eckbo worked, was focused on providing minimal living conditions for agricultural workers in the Southwest. These designs focused on windbreaks, playgrounds and community parks associated with low income housing projects. After the end of the World War II, he formed a partnership with his brother-in-law Edward Williams and Robert Royston, who had formerly worked for landscape architect Thomas Church. At this point Eckbo began to focus on residential design, which was to remain the greater part of his work throughout his career. His designs for the Case Study House program, sponsored by *Arts and Architecture* magazine from 1948 to 1962, gave him the opportunity to design model landscapes to accompany architectural designs by noted contemporary architects. It was at this point that his work began to reach a wider audience. Here Eckbo's mature style developed, showing offset interlocking spaces offset by angled walls intersecting with walls or rows of trees based on arcs. His affinity for the work of twentieth-century visual artists, especially Kandinsky, became a fundamental underpinning of his work.⁹³

The majority of Eckbo's designs, which number over a thousand, were residential, but a number of public spaces are among them. Between 1955 and 1976 his work included projects at several college campuses, two malls, an urban roof garden, a botanic garden, and a cemetery. The projects most closely related to Eckbo's Tucson commission are the Union Bank Square (1964), Fulton Mall (1964), and the Denver Botanic Garden (1969). All of these designs show Eckbo's underlying use of abstract geometry. His materials vocabulary of formed concrete, modular brick, mounded earth covered with turf, and water features adjacent to pedestrian walkways can be found in all of these works.

The Fulton Mall in Fresno, CA, represents the transformation of a street into a pedestrian mall, an eighty-foot wide right of way designed to mimic the rippled soil of the San Joaquin Valley through the use of curvilinear and angular ribbons of concrete aggregate.⁹⁴ Use of geographic location as a design concept was likewise important in the design for the TCC Historic District, invoking the landscape of Sabino Canyon – a beloved recreational area to the northeast of Tucson. The overall goal for the Fulton Mall was to provide a green central space for surrounding commercial buildings by converting an existing street to a pedestrian way. The design includes seating, play spaces, pools, fountains and nineteen sculptures acquired specifically for the space. The influence of the plan for the Fulton Mall can be seen in the design of the Walkway, which shares many two-dimensional features – an asymmetrical axis, a rectilinear water feature, and a dynamic balance of vegetation. In addition, it was the Fulton Mall that led the Tucson joint venture team to select Eckbo as their landscape architect.⁹⁵

The Union Bank Square in Los Angeles, CA, is a roof garden, intended to be viewed from above as well as provide a retreat for pedestrians. Design similarities to the TCC Landscape include a plan of arcs and grids - a strong, almost literal connection to the work of visual artists he admired. It contains an elegant water feature, but site limitations require the water to be contained in a shallow pool. Like the Fulton Mall, this site is comprised of a level, rectangular space.

Like the Fulton Mall and the Union Bank Square, the Denver Botanic Garden was also designed a pedestrian retreat. Walkways, a main outdoor gathering place, and an extended water sequence are features that resonate with the TCC Historic District design. Concrete basins with steppingstones permit visitors an immediate link to tangible water. Earthen mounds and depressions provide a three-dimensional aspect to the design. Use of turfed mounds and formed concrete is shared with the Tucson design. Uncharacteristic of Eckbo's work, a large fountain (reminiscent of that designed by Philip Johnson for the Fort Worth Water Garden) serves as an origin for the sequence. Nothing Eckbo designed for the TCC landscape is this directive or monumental.

The Tucson site itself provided something different from these level, quadrangular spaces. In *Landscape for Living*, Eckbo discusses the importance of site topography: "If the land has some irregularity or slope it has to that extent a third dimension which produces some sense of volume, determined by the vertical pull of gravity".⁹⁶ Unlike the three contemporary projects mentioned above, the TCC site provided Eckbo with an unparalleled opportunity to practice a full

⁹³ Treib and Imbert, *Garrett Eckbo: Modern Landscapes for Living*, 44-61.

⁹⁴ The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "Fulton Mall."

⁹⁵ Pavillard, "Old Pueblo has a New Heart".

⁹⁶ Eckbo, *Landscape for Living*, 61.

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range of the principles of three-dimensional design about which he wrote so passionately. In fact, the topography of this site, with its dramatic slope to the west, made an exploration of three-dimensional space a requirement as well as an option. The irregularity of the TCC site boundaries, especially in the Fountain Plaza, provided an opportunity for Eckbo to blur indoor and outdoor spaces, providing transitions from buildings to landscape in a way that was not possible with sites having better-defined edges. The flowing character of the design, offering a range of different 'people places' in close proximity, is a unique defining characteristic of the TCC district.

In addition, the Fulton Mall, the Union Bank Square and the Denver Botanic Garden are essentially unified designs. Only the Tucson site offered potential for three linked yet strongly individual design areas. This afforded unity and contrast – a theme and variations based on the movement of water through the landscape. One can only feel that this was the site for which Eckbo had been waiting, because after completing this project he turned his attention to urban and regional planning on a larger scale.

THE TCC HISTORIC DISTRICT TODAY

With the revival of downtown Tucson, the importance of this landscape as a vital ingredient in the urban scene has been rediscovered. In 2010 the Museum of Contemporary Art (Tucson) asked Emily Yetman, then an MLA student at the University of Arizona, to serve as a Scholar in Residence with the goal of beginning research on the Eckbo design. Her work led to the listing of the landscape on Landslide, the Cultural Landscape Foundation's list of important landscapes threatened with destruction.⁹⁷ Her work was continued by the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation, which in 2012 commissioned Helen Erickson to write a *Historic Conservation Master Plan*.⁹⁸ In 2014 the Urban Land Institute published *Downtown Tucson Arizona; Working Together to Revitalize Downtown*, which cited the importance of the landscape in continuing efforts to improve the urban center.⁹⁹ During the spring term 2015, the University of Arizona and Pima Community College united with the City of Tucson to focus three academic courses on planning and documenting the landscape; a published report of this work, which includes a stewardship plan, documentation of condition, and a three-dimensional model of the space, will be available from the Drachman Institute at the University of Arizona in August 2015.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

GARRETT ECKBO AND COMPARABLE DESIGNS BY OTHER MODERN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

A concise history of Modern landscape architecture remains to be written, but the names most frequently associated with the movement, in addition to Garrett Eckbo, are Thomas Church (1902-78), Daniel Kiley (1912-2004) and, above all, Lawrence Halprin (1916 – 2009). Of these, Lawrence Halprin completed the greatest number of urban designs. Yet it is difficult to encapsulate the period of the 1960s and 1970s by citing the work of only these three Modernists, because of the numerous others who made significant contributions to urban design in this period. It is perhaps more helpful to provide some specific examples of work roughly contemporaneous with the TCC District. A brief discussion of three landscapes noted for their water features follows.

Lawrence Halprin designed the Open Space Sequence in Portland, Oregon, during the 1960s, at the same time that Eckbo was working on the Fulton Mall, Union Bank Square and the TCC Historic District. Here Halprin designed stepped terraces covered with sheets of water intended to mimic the waterfalls and streams of the nearby Cascade Range. Like the TCC Historic District, the sequence was expansive, including three parks linked by a network of pedestrian paths. This non-contiguous historic district includes a twenty-five foot high concrete fountain feature as well as a smaller bubbler fountain in separate areas. The monumental quality of this design provides a major contrast with the more human scale of the TCC landscape.¹⁰⁰ As one of the great works of landscape architecture, this site illustrates the difference between Halprin and Eckbo. Halprin's design is far more controlling, offering the opportunity to see the landscape through the eyes of the designer. It is essentially pre-choreographed. The TCC landscape, on the other hand, is an invitation to a visual

⁹⁷ Emily Yetman, "Eckbo-Designed Tucson Convention Center Landscape."

⁹⁸ Helen Erickson, "Conservation Master Plan: Tucson Community Center Landscape Designed by Garrett Eckbo," (2012).

⁹⁹ Urban Land Institute, "A ULI Advisory Services Panel Report: Downtown Tucson Arizona: Working Together to Revitalize Downtown: November 17-22, 2013," (Washington, DC: The Urban Land Institute, 2014), 19.

¹⁰⁰ The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "Portland Open Space Sequence."

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and sensual adventure. Eckbo believed that "landscape experience is a complete composite of everything that can be seen or sensed from every station point of circulation."¹⁰¹ Every turn, every new point of perspective reveals something unique to each individual. Each visit is, in a sense, a first encounter with the space.

Another work of this period is the Fort Worth Water Garden, Texas (1974) designed by Philip Johnson. Geometric tiered water features and turf-filled planters are formed of concrete. A multi-level site, stairs set at angles provide access from upper to lower areas. A water channel runs along a balcony wall. Trees are set into circular tree wells in the paving and are also set into turfed planters. Giant steppingstones provide immediate water access for the visitor. Although this design is created as a single unit rather than a sequence, there are a number of similarities to the TCC Historic District, including concrete "stepping stones" through the water flow (as in Veinte de Agosto Park) or trees set into paving as in the Walkway and the Fountain Plaza.¹⁰² The architectural design provides an enclosed oasis, an area of retreat, which is but one of the functions of the TCC landscape. And while they have much in common in the presence of tangible water, the Water Garden is a unitary design rather than a complex linkage of sites as is found in the Open Space Sequence or the TCC district.

A third example of a landscape from this period is Peavey Plaza, Minneapolis, Minnesota (1975) designed by M. Paul Friedberg. This plaza shows links to the Open Space Sequence in the monumental character of its design. Composed of amphitheater-style seating around a central pool designed to contain water in summer and serve as a skating rink in winter, it includes turf-filled planters and surrounding trees set into pavement or planters. Like the Fort Worth Water Garden, this landscape is composed of a single segment. Common elements with the TCC Historic District include materials, a range of levels and tangible water.¹⁰³ One of the major differences is that Peavey Plaza is designed – like the Fort Worth Water Garden – as an enclosure. The difference between this concept of protected space and Eckbo's vision of a landscape balanced somewhere on a sliding scale between the needs of an entire central city to a boulder scatter on a mound of grass-covered turf is what makes the TCC landscape unique. Within its extended district, protected areas transition into wide views of mountains or historic architecture, while serving as the green connective tissue of an urban center.

Ultimately the TCC Historic District has more in common with other Eckbo designs of the same period than with these masterpieces, although it shares with the Open Space Sequence a conceptual link to adjacent landscape. Overall, Eckbo's work is less monumental and more human in its scale, yet more open to surrounding context. It pulls the surrounding architecture into the landscape rather than creating a contrast and respite from it. Eckbo's use of materials is also somewhat different, including mounded earth and natural boulders. His vegetation palette is also broader, including a wide range of shrubs as well as trees. Eckbo's designs emphasize the creation of spaces to be activated by people rather than providing dominating landscape features. Throughout, water is presented as an interactive landscape feature rather than merely a visual enhancement.

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¹⁰¹ Eckbo, "Metropolitan Design, Form and Content in Urban Areas," 136.

¹⁰² The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "Fort Worth Water Garden."

¹⁰³ The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "Peavey Plaza."

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Tucson Community Center Historic District
Name of Property

Pima County, Arizona
County and State

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¹⁰⁴ Articles have been drawn from ephemera files at the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, AZ. In some cases the only available bibliographic information is handwritten on clippings.

Tucson Community Center Historic District
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County and State

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PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

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Previous documentation on file (NPS): none

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

City of Tucson;

University of Arizona Special Collections: Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 5.75

Tucson Community Center Historic District
Name of Property

Pima County, Arizona
County and State

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>12</u>	<u>502538</u>	<u>3564957</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Tucson Community Center Historic District is located on the southern edge of downtown Tucson and extends south to the Barrio Viejo Historic District. To the east is Tucson's Cathedral Block, to the west views of the Tucson Mountains.

For convenience of description, the Tucson Community Center Historic District is divided into three sections.

- (1) Veinte de Agosto Park to the north of Block 510. This noncontiguous section of the landscape does not have a Pima County parcel number, but it is an ordained City of Tucson park named in honor of the founding of the Tucson Presidio on August 20, 1775. Its area is approximately 1 acre. A triangle of land, it is bounded on the north by Congress Street, on the east by Church Avenue, and on the southwest by Broadway Boulevard.

Veinte de Agosto Park is roughly delineated by coordinates beginning at the northeast corner: 32°13'18.16"N and 110°58'20.94"W; 32°13'16.10"N and 110°58'21.04"W; 32°13'17.23"N and 110°58'29.45"W; and return to beginning. The paved street of the u-turn lane is not included.

Veinte de Agosto Park is a discontiguous section of the Tucson Community Center Historic District.

- (2) The Walkway links the Fountain Plaza to an office / shopping / restaurant complex and to a pedestrian bridge leading across Broadway Boulevard and Congress Street to City of Tucson and Pima County government buildings to the north. Parcel 117-200-016C is an irregular parcel located on the west side of lot 5, Block 510. Its area is approximately .2 acres. It is contained within an area bounded on the north by Broadway Boulevard, on the east by a office / shopping / restaurant complex, on the south by the Fountain Plaza, and on the west by a hotel.

The Walkway is roughly delineated by a rectangle with coordinates beginning at the northeast corner: 32°13'16.61"N and 110°58'25.64"; 32°13'16.56"N and 110°58.26.13"W; 32°13'13.71"N and 110°58'25.80"W; 32°13'13.76"N and 110°58'25.37"W; and return to beginning. No buildings are included.

- (3) The Fountain Plaza consists of all of Parcel 117-20-0270 (Tucson Convention Center Block D; Map & Plat 42/10) and the northeast quarter of Parcel 117-20-029-A (Tucson Convention Center Block D; Map & Plat 42/10). The estimated area of this landscape section is approximately 4.3 acres. On the north side it is roughly bounded by the hotel and the office / shopping / restaurant complex; on the east by Church Avenue; on the south by Cushing Street and by the Arena; and on the west by the Sosa/Carrillo/Fremont historic property, the Music Hall and West Calle Carlos Arruza.

The Fountain Plaza is roughly contained within an irregular polygon delineated by coordinates beginning at the northeast corner: 32°13'14.62"N and 110°58'25.98"W; 32°13'14.37"N and 110°58'29.50"W; 32°13'10.49"N and 110°58'29.45"W; 32°13'10.56"N and 110°58'28.62"W; 32°13'8.97"N and 110°58'27.86"W; 32°13'8.98"N and 110°58'23.63"W; and return to beginning. No buildings or asphalt paved streets or parking areas are included.

Tucson Community Center Historic District
Name of Property

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encloses those sections of the Eckbo-designed landscape which retain integrity.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Helen Erickson
organization Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation date June 27, 2015
street & number P.O. Box 40008 telephone 520-247-8969
city or town Tucson State AZ zip code 85717
e-mail info@preservetucson.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Log of Figures

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Name of Property: Tucson Community Center Historic District
City or Vicinity: Tucson
County: Pima County
State: AZ
Name of Photographer: Helen Erickson
Location of Original Digital Files: 4012 E. Poe St., Tucson, AZ 85711

Photo #1 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0001)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Veinte de Agosto Park: Camera facing north across Broadway Boulevard towards Government Center

Photo #2 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0002)

Date of Photograph: March 2012

Veinte de Agosto Park: Camera facing northeast towards water sequence

Photo #3 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0003)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Veinte de Agosto Park: Camera facing southwest across water sequence

Tucson Community Center Historic District
Name of Property

Pima County, Arizona
County and State

Photo #4 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0004)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Walkway: Camera facing south

Photo #5 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0005)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Walkway: Camera facing north

Photo #6 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0006)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Walkway: Camera facing south

Photo #7 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0007)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Fountain Plaza North Section: Camera facing south from balcony of office / shopping/ restaurant complex to Arena (center) and Music Hall (right)

Photo #8 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0008)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Fountain Plaza North Section: Camera facing west across plaza

Photo #9 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0009)

Date of Photograph: March 2012

Fountain Plaza North Section (Allée): Camera facing north

Photo #10 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0010)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Fountain Plaza North Section: Camera facing east to Cathedral

Photo #11 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0011)

Date of Photograph: July 2014

Fountain Plaza North Section: Camera facing south to Leo Rich Theater from Arena Arcade

Photo #12 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0012)

Date of Photograph: April 2012

Fountain Plaza North Section: Camera facing southwest towards Music Hall

Photo #13 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0013)

Date of Photograph: July 2014

Fountain Plaza South Section: Camera facing south along Church Avenue

FIGURE LOG

Name of Property:	Tucson Community Center Historic District
City or Vicinity:	Tucson
County:	Pima County
State:	AZ
Location of Digital Files:	4012 E. Poe St., Tucson, AZ 85711

Figure #1 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0014)

USGS Map showing location of TCC Historic District

Source: USGS 7.5 Quadrangle (Tucson, AZ) 1996

Figure #2 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0015)

Tucson Community Center Historic District
Name of Property

Pima County, Arizona
County and State

City of Tucson Urban Renewal District

Source: Drawn from Lung, Vincent L. and Roy Drachman, Tucson Citizens Committee on Municipal Blight. *The Pueblo Center Redevelopment Project : Report Presented to the Central City Council of the Urban Land Institute, April 23, 1965, by Roy Drachman, Chairman, Citizens Committee on Municipal Blight and Vincent L. Lung, Assistant City Manager and Coordinator of Community Development.* Tucson, AZ: City of Tucson, 1965.

Figure #3 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0016)
TCC Historic District Boundary Map

Source: Adapted from Google Earth 2012

Figure #4 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0017)
1974 Aerial View of TCC Historic District

Source: Detail from 1974 Tucson Survey, Courtesy of Cooper Aerial Surveys Co.

Figure #5 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0018)
Veinte de Agosto Contributing and Non-Contributing Features

Source: Adapted from Google Earth 2012

Figure #6 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0019)
Veinte de Agosto Photo Key

Source: Adapted from Google Earth 2012

Figure #7 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0020)
Aerial photo of Veinte de Agosto Park (1973), in background of construction of office / shopping / restaurant complex, camera facing northeast

Source: Arizona Historical Society, Tucson AZ. AHS#103444

Figure #8 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0021)
Veinte de Agosto, 1974, camera facing southwest across water sequence

Source: Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Figure #9 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0022)
Walkway Contributing and Non-Contributing Features

Source: Adapted from Google Earth 2012

Figure #10 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0023)
Walkway Photo Key

Source: Adapted from Google Earth 2012

Figure #11 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0024)
Walkway 1974, camera facing north end of Walkway and Tobias fountain sculpture

Source: Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Figure #12 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0025)
Fountain Plaza North and South Location / Boundary Map

Source: Adapted from Google Earth 2012

Figure #13 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0026)
Fountain Plaza North Contributing and Non-Contributing Features

Source: Adapted from Google Earth 2012

Figure #14 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0027)
Fountain Plaza North Photo Key

Source: Adapted from Google Earth 2012

Tucson Community Center Historic District
Name of Property

Pima County, Arizona
County and State

Figure #15 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0028)

Fountain Plaza 1974, camera facing west across Fountain Plaza North towards Music Hall

Source: Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Figure #16 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0029)

Fountain Plaza 1974, camera facing north across water sequence to hotel

Source: Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Figure #17 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0030)

Fountain Plaza 1974, camera facing south towards Arena

Source: Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Figure #18 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0031)

Fountain Plaza 1974, camera facing southwest across water sequence towards Arena

Source: Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Figure #19 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0032)

Fountain Plaza 1974, camera facing northwest across non-extant bubbler fountain towards Music Hall, Arena to left

Source: Garrett Eckbo Collection (1990-1), Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Figure #20 (AZ_Pima County_Tucson Community Center Historic District_0033)

Fountain Plaza 1973, camera facing west towards Music Hall (photo was printed reversed)

Source: Gingerich, Sheldon E. "A Gem in the Art of Urban Renewal: Tucson Community Center." *Arizona Highways* 51, February, 1973: 33.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mayor Jonathan Rothschild/City of Tucson
street & number 255 West Alameda Street telephone 520-791-4201
city or town Tucson state AZ zip code 85701

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.