

Staff Summary Report

Historic Preservation Commission Date: 01/12/12

SUBJECT: Hold a public hearing for Historic Designation of TEMPE MUNICIPAL BUILDING

DOCUMENT NAME: SSR-HPC-Public Hearing Tempe Municipal.doc

COMMENTS: Request for **TEMPE MUNICIPAL BUILDING**, located at 31 E. 5th St.

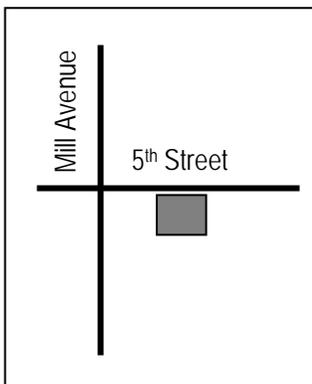
RECOMMENDATION: HPO Staff - Approval

PROCESS: On September 30, 2011, Mayor Hugh Hallman directed HPO to nominate the city-owned Tempe Municipal Building for historic designation and listing on the Tempe Historic Property register, recognizing the historical, cultural, and community significance of the property. HPO initiated the nomination process and reached a preliminary determination of eligibility. The following actions have been scheduled.

- Neighborhood Meeting @ Tempe HPC 12/08/2011 (unanimous support)
- Public Hearing @ Tempe HPC 01/12/2012
- Public Hearing @ Development Review Commission 01/24/2012
- Intro + 1st Public Hearing @ City Council 02/16/2012
- 2nd Public Hearing + Action @ City Council 03/08/2012

PUBLIC INPUT: On December 08, 2011, Tempe Historic Preservation Commission held a neighborhood meeting to notify residents, owners of property situated within 300 feet, and other stakeholders of the process for historic designation and listing in the Tempe Historic Property Register. At the December 08 meeting, the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission reached consensus to hold a public hearing, take additional input from interested persons, and make a recommendation regarding the proposed designation and listing.

BACKGROUND: Designed as a "lantern to the city," the landmark 1970 Tempe Municipal Building is a metaphor for openness and accessibility in municipal government and emblematic of a progressive community. The building is also significant for its pivotal role in downtown redevelopment, as the most recognizable work of local Tempe Architect Michael Goodwin, as an early example of passive solar design, and as a unique example of Mid-Century Modern style commercial architecture.



SIGNIFICANCE –

The landmark 1970 Tempe Municipal Building is significant because of its close association with the redevelopment of downtown Tempe in the 1970's. The building helped renew investment in the central business district and promoted local business's to join in the redevelopment effort. This became a critical juncture in Tempe's municipal land use planning and is now considered central to the initial revitalization and continued viability of the downtown commercial district. Tempe Municipal Building is also considered to be the property most expressive of the collaborative work between Michael Kemper Goodwin (1939 - 2011) and his father, Kemper Goodwin (1906 – 1997), arguably the most significant phase in the development of Michael's architectural career. Tempe Municipal Building also holds significance as an early example of passive solar design and because of its relation to the mid-century modern architecture movement, an important period of experimentation with context-based modern design, architecture, and urban development that occurred at a period of unparalleled development and expansion in the Metro-Valley area, which as a consequence, came close to producing a truly recognizable regional design style for commercial architecture.¹

AGE –

The landmark 1970 Tempe Municipal Building opened its doors to the public in 1970. According to the City of Tempe Historic Preservation ordinance (Tempe City Code Chapter 14 A-4 a) 3) the building can qualify for historic property designation and listing in the Tempe Historic Property Register as an historical landmark because it has "achieved significance within the past 50 years, expresses distinctive character worthy of preservation, and because it exceeds the criteria for designation as an historic property." Once so designated, in 2021, when the landmark becomes fifty (50) years old, it will automatically be reclassified as an historic property in accordance with ordinance provisions.

CONDITION –

The Tempe Municipal Building is a prime example of the Mid-Century Modern style of commercial architecture in Tempe. Mature landscaping around the property is all well maintained and cared for to such degree that guessing its age might prove difficult.

CHANGES OVER TIME –

The landmark 1970 Tempe Municipal Building has undergone several alterations over time. In 1987, completion infill construction of Garden Level West provided new office space for the Engineering Division of the Tempe Public Works Department. In 1998, the City opened additional offices for the Development Services Department by expanding the center section of Garden Level East. Both of these additions were completed with sensitivity and are now considered to contribute to the overall character of the landmark property. Alterations to the original site have also been made within the complex itself, where pathways and pedestrian bridges have either been changed or removed to accommodate and connect with other buildings and landscapes in and around the complex. In 2002, 6th Street east of Mill Avenue was re-designed as a 1.5-acre public park. The wide concrete walkway around the south and west sides of City Hall offers various types of landscaping and park benches. In a second phase of development completed in 2009, Sixth Street Park was expanded 1.5 acres to the east as part of the construction of a new 400-space parking structure just east of City Hall. The remnant street level parking lot was transformed into the second part of Sixth Street Park. As with the building additions, these alterations were designed and constructed in keeping with the original concept of connecting the community to municipal government in a manner that is both accessible and accommodating. Accordingly, changes made to the property over time are not considered to adversely affect the historic integrity of the landmark 1970 Tempe Municipal Building.

INTEGRITY –

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the Tempe Historic Property Register, a property must be significant under ordinance criteria and it must also possess sufficient integrity to communicate its significance to persons familiar with the property or to the community at large. A property is evaluated according to aspects of integrity which must be present in different combinations depending on the criteria from which historic significance is based. Because the Tempe Municipal Building derives significance through association with broad patterns of community development, the property must maintain integrity of location, materials, feeling and association in order to convey this significance. In addition, because the Tempe Municipal Building embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction, represents the work of a master, possesses high artistic value, and represents a significant and distinguishable entity; to continue to convey significance under this criterion, the property must possess integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. The Tempe Municipal Building strongly conveys multiple levels of significance by maintaining necessary aspects of integrity, namely those of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association in excess of minimum requirements and as necessary to qualify for designation and listing.

Location – The Tempe Municipal Building is located at 31 East Fifth Street between Mill and College Avenues and forms the heart of the Harry E. Mitchell Government Complex in the historic core of downtown Tempe. This historic site retains its identity as the nexus of community and democracy while the iconic building continues to be recognized as the center of a proud and progressive municipal government.

Design – The intent of Michael Goodwin was for this property to be the “center-of-the-city.” Original site plans incorporated pathways that radiated out into the city from the building. These have since been modified to some extent to make room for adjacent new construction, but enough of the original design still exist so, coupled with the iconic form and fabric of the building, the landmark character persists.

Materials – The Tempe Municipal Building functions a passive solar building because of the inverted pyramidal form and solar bronze glazing which was state of the art in 1970. With the walls slanted at forty-five degrees the roof becomes a shading structure for the entire building. In winter the building is engineered allow direct sunlight to contact the glass and to trap heat in order to warm interior spaces.

Workmanship – The excellent workmanship and attention to detail allowed use of steel and glass construction in ways that gave Goodwin the ability to orient the building as an inverted pyramidal form thereby minimizing solar impact on the exterior surfaces. These features would not have achieved such resounding initial success and continued timelessness without the high standards of workmanship that translated new materials and technologies into a landmark.

Feeling – This property expresses the aesthetic sense of its Mid-Century Modern era of significance. The variety and volume of Modern style architecture produced during the middle of the 21st Century throughout the Valley is indicative of the economic boom occurring in Central Arizona at that time. Goodwin intended this building to have a “center-of-the-city” feel. Its unique form invokes curiosity in passersby, but it also has a welcoming and inviting quality that radiates outward to the rest of the city.

Association – Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and an historic property. The Tempe Municipal Building retains association as the cornerstone of decades of downtown redevelopment. The property is sufficiently intact to continue to convey that significance to an observer.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES –

Character-defining features are those qualities of a property conveyed by its materials, features, spaces and finishes. They are the means by which the historic character of a property is expressed. To define the character is to identify the continued presence of critical architectural attributes only. This does not address those intangible qualities that give a property or building or its contents its historic significance. Instead the identification and evaluation of character-defining features is based on the assumption that historic significance is embodied in those tangible aspects that include the building's setting, its form and fabric.²

Form - The iconic form of the Tempe Municipal Building has given “City Hall” a nickname popular throughout the community –“the Upside-down Pyramid”-- is famous in local lore as having many of the legendary or mythical capabilities of the right-side-up form, only sometimes capriciously acting in reverse. That these urban legends exist at all is testimony to the broad based popularity of the landmark 1970 Tempe Municipal Building at the grassroots level. The form or shape of the building helps give the Tempe Municipal Building its landmark identity. Rising from a unique open space within the dense urban setting, the inverted pyramidal form of the glass enclosed structure beckons all to come forth and talk of many things. The shape is so simple that adding a feature could not help convey its historic function as a lantern of democracy, a beacon of progress, and a bastion of civic pride and community confidence.

Fenestration - Upon this simple form there is a rhythm or pattern brought by the arrangement of windows and markings of stories that, much like the rhythm of windows in a factory building, helps to resolve the building's structural complexity in a comprehensible, almost playful manner. Not so the space between the angled window planes and the increasing office floors. Here is where the distinctive structure expresses the true complexity of its character.

Materials – Architect Michael Goodwin chose materials that exemplify technologies characteristic of the Mid-Century Modern style. Use of a steel structural frame, a new type of structural glazing system engineered to withstand weather changes and multiple structural forces encountered because of the forty-five degree walls, and the lustrous exterior glass that reflects light evenly without glitter or sparkle are representative of the state of the art of construction technology in 1970.

Setting – A practical definition of setting in the context of the Tempe Municipal Building is simply that it exists at the heart of the community; in the middle of the downtown commercial district it helped preserve and perpetuate.

Individual Spaces – Among the individual rooms or spaces that are important to this building because of their function, the Tempe City Council Chambers are the venue where council members and their constituents most frequently interact to carry out the detailed operations of municipal government. Representing City Hall to many community members, Council Chambers continue to provide citizens with opportunities to communicate face-to-face with the Tempe City Council as is vital for a strong representative local government. Chambers provide an intimate yet productive setting for Tempe City Council to connect with the community.

Related Spaces – Among the rooms or sequences of spaces that are important to this building because of their configuration, the lovely Garden Level half a flight down from the street, provides an oasis amidst the urban heat island and a sanctuary in the middle of the bustling city center. Offering a variety of natural and manmade shading features, the quiet perimeter offices of the garden level provide a range of sunlight modification from full sun to dense shade, and with some wonderfully nuanced mottled-lighting in between. This mezzo environment affords the public opportunity to cool down or decompress before embarking on another municipal adventure while simultaneously allowing city staff the chance to seek inspiration in the perpetuation of that great democracy that arises naturally in one form or another in any well-bonded group.

SPECIFIC HISTORIC CONTEXTS CONSIDERED –

To evaluate the historic significance of cultural resources and their eligibility for inclusion in historic property registers, a site or property must be understood within its interpretive contexts. Research for historic property designation uses historic contexts to synthesize information about the period, the place, and the events that created, influenced, or formed the backdrop of the historic resources. Research is designed to help explain the cultural and historical development of the property, document its historic significance, and substantiate a recommendation for designation.

Tempe HPO research prepared for the HPC Neighborhood Meeting on December 08, 2011, used several historic contexts to arrive at a preliminary determination of eligibility under multiple criteria for historic designation and listing Tempe Municipal Building in the Tempe Historic Property Register.³

Community Planning & Development in Tempe, Arizona 1968-1970

Planning and construction of a new Tempe Municipal Building, which began in earnest in 1968, concluded with opening the building in 1971. One component of a comprehensive campaign to renovate and modernize the city's facilities infrastructure, construction was financed through the sale of municipal bonds. Construction of the new city hall occurred simultaneously with the development of a new cultural center campus on city land at Rural Road and Southern Avenue. Development of the cultural center introduced an alternative to locate a new city hall away from the downtown. This would become highly controversial, as would the modern design of the Tempe Municipal Building which distinguished it from contemporaneous facilities constructed by the city and became the subject of much consideration and criticism alongside ongoing debate surrounding where to locate traditional city hall services. Now the centerpiece of the Harry E. Mitchell Government Complex, the Tempe Municipal Building is a unique pyramid of solar-bronzed glass and steel inverted in a sunken garden courtyard. Since opening in 1971, the Tempe Municipal Building has continued to provide a focal point for downtown redevelopment and a landmark for community building while supplying space for the growing community's city government.

Michael Goodwin, Architect 1939-2011

Tempe City Hall is significant under NPS Criterion as the Work of a Master, noted long-time Tempe architect Michael Goodwin, who passed away May 9, 2011 at the age of 72. Along with his father Kemper, Michael Goodwin left an indelible mark upon the City of Tempe and the surrounding communities through his innovative architectural designs. Tempe's iconic upside-down pyramid arguably serves as Goodwin's greatest architectural accomplishment and provides a lasting vestige to the memory of a highly influential Tempe family.

Mid-Century Modern Architecture in the Salt River Valley, 1945 – 1975

Mid-century modern was one of the most prominent architectural styles of its time because of its impact on technological and stylistic advances. This architecture had a dramatic impact on the Salt River Valley. It has been noted as the only true attempt at creating a distinct Arizona architecture style. Mid-century modern style evolved from a coalescence of three types of modern design: Art deco, stripped classical, and streamlined modern. Although all have slight variations in modern techniques, they all aim to do one uniform thing: simplifying the building by removing ornamental details and incorporating crisp lines and curves. Mid-century modern was greatly influenced by the industrial design style that preceded it. It uses glass, concrete, and steel while also incorporating new technologies, materials, and methods to produce its own distinctive forms and geometries.

CONCLUSION –

Over the past 140 years, Tempe holds national, state, and local significance for its important role in the development of the Salt River Valley as a center of commerce and education, as a critical link in the transportation networks during the settlement of the territory, and for its associations with important political figures. Tempe's unique heritage is exemplified in its significant cultural architecture and infrastructure. These qualities exist today in the Tempe Municipal Building as well as the rest of the downtown area. The Tempe Municipal Building, located at 31 East Fifth Street, between Mill and College Avenues, forms the heart of the Harry E. Mitchell Government Complex in the historic core of downtown Tempe. This historic site retains its identity as the nexus of community and democracy while the iconic building continues to be recognized as the center of a proud and progressive municipal government.

Tempe Municipal Building is significant because of its influence on downtown revitalization in Tempe during the 1970's. Using many techniques associated with mid-century modern architecture, this building has become an iconic landmark of the downtown area.

REASONS FOR APPROVAL –

Tempe Municipal Building is eligible for historic designation and listing in the Tempe Historic Property register under Tempe City Code Section 14A-4. Designation of landmarks, historic properties and historic districts –

- (a) The following criteria are established for designation of an individual property, building, structure or archeological site:
 - (1) It meets the criteria for listing on the Arizona or national register of historic places;
 - (2) It is found to be of exceptional significance and expresses a distinctive character, resulting from:
 - a. A significant portion of it is at least fifty (50) years old; is reflective of the city's cultural, social, political or economic past; and is associated with a person or event significant in local, state or national history; or
 - b. It represents an established and familiar visual feature of an area of the city, due to a prominent location or singular physical feature; or
 - (3) If it has achieved significance within the past fifty (50) years, it shall be considered eligible for designation as a landmark if it is an integral and critical part of an historic district or demonstrates exceptional individual importance by otherwise meeting or exceeding the criteria specified in paragraphs (1) or (2) of this subsection above. At such time as a landmark becomes fifty (50) years old, it will automatically be reclassified as an historic property.

RECOMMENDATION –

The Historic Preservation Office recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission –

– MOVE THAT THE TEMPE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION APPROVE THE NOMINATION AND RECOMMEND TO THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION THAT THE TEMPE MUNICIPAL BUILDING BE DESIGNATED HISTORIC AND LISTED IN THE TEMPE HISTORIC PROPERTY REGISTER.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL –

None

CODE REFERENCE –

City Code Chapter 14A, Historic Preservation
Zoning and Development Code, Section 6-304, Zoning Amendment

HISTORY & FACTS:

- July 1964 Civic Center Site Selection Committee appointed by Council to investigate need and feasibility of a Civic Center for Tempe recommends site from Mill to College from 3rd to 6th Streets (17 acres at base of butte with 75 structures mostly dilapidated).
- Jan 01, 1966 Tempe Planning Department prepares site and traffic studies for new city hall construction. Projected employee and space needs 1965 to 1985, design factors, site plan analysis, description of buildings, general cost estimates, and recommended development schedules were evaluated under this program for property acquisition.
- July 1966 Tempe Planning & Van Cleve report on Community Facilities as part of Comprehensive Planning Program with grant from Urban Renewal Administration of the HHFA under the Urban Assistance Program. 1999.2035.109
- Sept 27, 1966 Tempe voters reject 2-1 borrowing \$1.6M to buy downtown civic center site and to form a nonprofit corporation to finance construction of buildings. 2001.0000.0154
- c. 1967 Tempe Municipal Buildings Corporation sold \$2.5M bonds for City Hall and Cultural Complex at Rural & Southern. Tempe Municipal Buildings Corporation sold \$1.65M bonds for Library Community Center. 2000.0000.1003
- May 25, 1967 Tempe's first comprehensive land use plan, General Plan 1967, recommended keeping the Civic Center (City Hall) and the Cultural Center (Library) together at one downtown location.
- June 19, 1968 Tempe contracts Frank Kelly MAI to review and update appraisals for condemnation of properties within the proposed Tempe Civic Center Complex site on 5th Street. 2000.0000.685
- March 19, 1969, All City offices, including the library, were moved to temporary quarters in Danelle Plaza, 3300 S. Mill Avenue. The deserted buildings were razed and construction began on a new City Hall at the same site, 31 E. Fifth Street, and on a cultural complex at Rural Road and Southern Avenue.
<http://www.tempe.gov/library/about/libhist.htm>
- November 21, 1969 After years of planning, Council give go-ahead to new city hall building by a 4-2 vote with Vice Mayor William J. LoPiano abstaining.
- Jan 01, 1970 United States Congress enacts the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 in which the "cultural environment" is considered through provisions to preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage
- April 1970 City decides downtown conditions will require major effort to restore area to position of prominence in community - hire Candeub, Fleissig & Associates for preparation of survey and planning application for urban renewal funding 1999.2043.359
- Dec 1970 In December 1970 citizens authorized the first comprehensive long-range bond program - \$15.5M supplement for capital improvements over 6 - 10 years 2000.0000.709
- Jan 14, 1971 Tempe adopts "Workable Program" with application for funding the overall redevelopment program under the Federal Neighborhood Development Program (predecessor to CDBG program). 1999.2043.186

- April 20, 1971 The Tempe Centennial in 1971 and the American Bicentennial in 1976 inspired renewed pride in the community's history and landmarks.
- August 1971 City Hall construction at 31 East Fifth Street completed. Planning began in 1968 financed through sale of bonds through a non-profit corporation and repaid with tax revenues. Redevelopment replaced the original City Hall building ca. 1914.
- October 1, 1971 Dedication ceremony for new City Hall building at 31 E 5th Street on the site of the old city hall.
- September 2011 Mayor Hugh Hallman drafts letter of support for historic designation of Double Butte Cemetery.
- November 16, 2011 HPO staff presents Determination of Eligibility to Tempe Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Committee and receives unanimous support for listing on Tempe Historic Property Register.
- December 08, 2011 Tempe HPC approves determination of eligibility for Double Butte Cemetery.

ENDNOTES

¹ azcentral.com accessed online December 19, 2011 <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/azcentral/obituary.aspx?n=michael-kemper-goodwin&pid=150853683> "Goodwin was an important architect in the Phoenix, Arizona area, and the only architect to have served in the Arizona House of Representatives. He was also the first winner of the Arizona Chapter of the AIA's Arizona Architects' Medal and was named a Fellow of AIA in 1978. One of the Valley's most esteemed architects, Goodwin, whose parents were Mary and Kemper Goodwin, was the grandson of Tempe pioneers Garfield and Jenny Goodwin. His father worked with his father in the architectural firm of Michael & Kemper Goodwin Ltd. Michael joined his father's firm in 1967, and they designed many K-12 schools, including Marcos de Niza and Corona del Sol high schools together."

² Cultural Landscape Report for the Platt Historic District - Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Chapter 7: Analysis of Character-Defining Features and Integrity and Statement of Significance accessed December 19, 2011 online at http://www.nps.gov/chic/historyculture/upload/Platt-CLR_chap-07.pdf

³ Ibid