

## Staff Summary Report



City Council Hearing: 04/20/06

Agenda Item Number: 28

**SUBJECT:** This is an introduction and first public hearing for Tempe National Bank Building for the historic designation of the Tempe National Bank Building, located at 526 South Mill Avenue. The second public hearing is set for May 4, 2006.

**DOCUMENT NAME:** 20060420dssa05

**PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (0406)**

**SUPPORTING DOCS:** Yes

**COMMENTS:** Introduce and hold the first public hearing for **TEMPE NATIONAL BANK BUILDING (RRC060003)** (526 Mill LLC, owner / City of Tempe, applicant) **Ordinance No. 2006.19 #HPO-2006.16** for the historic designation of the Tempe National Bank Building, consisting of approximately .21 acres, located at 526 South Mill Avenue, in the CC, City Center District.

**PREPARED BY:** Steve Abrahamson, Senior Planner (480-350-8359)

**REVIEWED BY:** Steve Venker, Planning and Zoning Manager (480-350-8920)

**FINAL REVIEW BY:** Lisa Collins, Planning Director (480-350-8989)

**LEGAL REVIEW BY:** N/A

**FISCAL NOTE:** N/A

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff – Approval  
Historic Preservation Commission – Approval  
Redevelopment Review Commission - Approval

**ADDITIONAL INFO:** This request is for the historic designation of the Tempe National Bank Building. Located at the northwest corner of Sixth Street and Mill Avenue, the area includes .21 acres of land.

The historic 1912 Tempe National Bank building survives as tangible evidence of an institution that made significant contributions to the broad patterns of community history and development. It became an instant landmark when, with a single bold statement, it first proclaimed a new identity for the community. The structure still stands in testimony of earlier community aspirations and ambitions. Spared from proposed demolition at the onset of the 21st century, the 2005 interpretive rehabilitation of the structure retains the original scale, proportion, and orientation of the landmark 1912 property as it continues to define the southern gateway to historic Mill Avenue in Tempe.

Staff recommends approval of the request for the historic designation of the Tempe National Bank building and recommends to the Redevelopment Review Commission and City Council that the property be designated as Tempe Historic Property. **At a public hearing held Thursday, March 9, 2006, the Tempe Historic Preservation Commission approved a recommendation to the Redevelopment Review Commission for this request. At the March 21, 2006 public hearing, the Redevelopment Review Commission recommended approval of this request.**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1 List of Attachments
- 2-5. Comments
- 5. Reasons for Approval/Conditions of Approval
- 5-6 History & Facts
- 6. Description
  
- A. Ordinance No. 2006.19
- B. Location Map(s)
- C. Aerial Photo(s)
- D. Letter of Explanation
- E. References/Photos

## COMMENTS:

### Background + Status

An application for designation of the above-referenced property as a Tempe Historic Property and listing in the Tempe Historic Property Registry was submitted by the property owner, 526 Mill LLC. The application has been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Office and all requirements for notification, posting and advertisement, as set forth in Chapter 14A "Historic Preservation" of the Tempe City Code, have been met and a public hearing set. The present function of the property is commercial/retail. The property is zoned CC, "City Center", and identified as "Mixed Use" in General Plan 2030.

The following dates have been scheduled for the designation process:

RRC Public Hearing Date: March 21, 2006

Council 1 Public Hearing Date: April 20, 2006

Council 2 Public Hearing Date: May 4, 2006

### History

The historic 1912 Tempe National Bank building survives as tangible evidence of an institution that made significant contributions to the broad patterns of community history and development. The Tempe National Bank was established on January 4, 1901, by pioneer Tempe businessmen and agriculturalists in a demonstration of optimism and commitment to the future of the community.

The Tempe National Bank building became an instant landmark when, with a single bold statement, it first proclaimed a new identity for the community. The 1912 structure still stands in testimony of earlier community aspirations and ambitions. Spared from proposed demolition at the onset of the 21st century, the 2005 interpretive rehabilitation of the structure retains the original scale, proportion, and orientation of the landmark 1912 property as it continues to define the southern gateway to historic Mill Avenue in Tempe.

Paul Hughes, writing in the 1971 First National Bank of Arizona publication "Bank Notes", provides the following summary of the inception of the bank.

"Nowhere was there greater optimism than in Tempe, the village named by Lord Darrell Duppa after the classic Vale of Tempe in ancient Greece. The town refused the temptation to stand in the shadow of Phoenix, just across the River; it insisted on an identity of its own.'

The Normal School was turning out more and more teachers every year, young people prepared to do battle against ignorance on all fronts. And the farming country around the town, fed by waters siphoned laboriously from the Salt, was just about the richest to be found anywhere; apparently it would grow anything. As the new century opened, it was growing a few experimental acres of Egyptian long-staple cotton, already pronounced the best in the whole nation.'

Establishment of a bank seemed a normal part of the expansionist sentiment. And its birth coincided almost precisely with the beginning of the 20th century. It was on January 4, 1901, that the stockholders assembled for the first time. They got together in the offices of Charles Woolf, a pioneer attorney. And when they emerged, they had created the Tempe National Bank.'

The first stockholders included Carl Hayden, of the family that had settled the town, C. G. Jones was elected president; A. C. Ozanne vice-president; and W. H. Wilbur cashier, at a salary of \$75 a month. In virtually no time at all, Tempe National Bank was helping to irrigate the desert with its own variety of liquid assets." p.37

From its establishment in 1901, the bank operated under the control and direction of the community's most intrepid pioneers. The following biographical vignettes illuminate the founding stockholders: W. A. Bolton, early Tempe insurance and real estate broker; Michael Edward Curry, Sr., Tempe Town Councilman and founder of the Tempe Hardware Company; Carl Trumbull Hayden, Arizona's longtime Congressman and Senator, whose record for fifty-six consecutive years of service in the Congress, including an unprecedented forty-two in the Senate, was unsurpassed at the time of his retirement; Cyrus Grant Jones, first president of the Tempe National Bank and alfalfa farmer in Tempe; Albert E. Miller, son of Tempe pioneer Winchester Miller, farmer, rancher, a director of the Tempe Irrigating Canal Company, and president of the Arizona Mercantile Company (In 1900, Miller constructed the Miller Block building); Alfred Carre Ozanne, first vice-president of the Tempe National Bank; Amanda Richards, founding director of the First Christian Church of Tempe incorporated 1898; William Rohrig, well-to-do Tempe rancher and farmer (in 1898 he donated land for construction of the Rohrig School); Wolf Sachs, prominent Arizona cattle rancher, freighter and merchant, Sachs became one of the Valley's most influential citizens and, in 1896, he became one of the first elected members of the Tempe Town Council; Ethelbert Willis Wilbur, organizer of the Mesa City Bank and a member of the committee that developed the Articles of Incorporation for the Salt River Valley Water Users' Association; Walter H. Wilbur, first cashier of the Tempe National Bank and a leading financier of Maricopa County, son of E. W. Wilbur; James W. Woolf, Tempe rancher served in the Arizona Territorial Legislature in 1897 and in 1903 and later formed a partnership with builder Milton H. Meyer to start a local concrete block manufacturing industry. Throughout its long history, the Tempe National Bank would continue to enjoy the attention of Tempe's most prominent citizens and remain intimately linked to the development and progress of the community. Thanks Anderson, Mayor of Tempe from 1930-1932 and 1934-1937, began his banking career here in 1915 and went on to become branch manager and then vice-president of the bank. Joseph Birchett was director of the Tempe National Bank as well as mayor of Tempe from 1912 to 1914. Benjamin Baker Moer, physician and businessman in Tempe, served two terms as Governor of Arizona and had his practice in the building. Harvey Samuel Harelson started working as a teller at the bank, became assistant cashier and assistant manager, he operated the Harelson Insurance Agency, served on the Tempe Town Council from 1924 to 1928, and was a member of the Tempe Union High School District governing board from 1928 to 1943. Charles C. Woolf, Tempe City Attorney, active in the Phoenix Title and Abstract Company, the Tempe Water Development Company, the Salt River Valley Water Users Association and the Tempe-Mesa Produce Company and had his offices in the building.

Many of these community leaders influenced history through a myriad of individual accomplishments and achievements. Through their concerted actions as directors of the Tempe National Bank, however, each has left a legacy of community development, progress, and prosperity that the historic 1912 Tempe National Bank building continues to recall.

The Tempe National Bank was Tempe's first national bank. Since its founding in 1864, the national banking system combined a local presence with a national perspective. Located in communities throughout the country, national banks are supervised locally by examiners who understand the people and the economies their banks serve. Each national bank is part of a strong nationwide system, administered by the Comptroller of the Currency, who represents that system in Congress, in the public arena, and in the courts. National Banks offer the benefits of sophisticated and responsive bank supervision and a fully competitive national charter.

## Context

The building opened for business on June 28, 1912; the bank having grown as a financial institution in the stimulating atmosphere of progress then requiring larger facilities. The building is associated with the context of Commerce/Banking. Tempe National Bank financed agricultural projects in Tempe and throughout the valley. Its earliest investments in sugar cane and sugar beet crops along with the Southwestern Sugar Company in Glendale proved unprofitable when the factory failed in 1913, but the bank had significant success in the cotton industry. Tempe National Bank was instrumental in the development of long-staple "Egyptian" cotton as a Valley crop, and built the first long-staple cotton gin in the United States with equipment shipped from England. The bank's plant at Seventh Street and Ash Avenue later became the Tempe Cotton Exchange.

Located on Mill Avenue next to the 1898 Tempe Hardware Building in downtown Tempe, the 1912 Egyptian Revival structure was the work of Phoenix architect Leighton Green Knipe. Knipe designed the 1914 Tempe City Hall and the 1914 ASU Industrial Arts Building before going on to design of the town plan for Litchfield Park in 1918. In light of his more traditional, neoclassical designs for campus buildings and city hall, the style chosen for the bank building marked a departure for both the architect and the community. The extant

structure is believed to be the first commercial building constructed in this idiom in Arizona. Egyptian Revival is arguably one of the most dramatic and enigmatic of all historic architectural styles, remaining largely obscure throughout each wave of revival expression. In fact, this form emerged in the United States around 1820, flourished somewhat during the period 1830-1850 (primarily for memorials, cemeteries, and prisons) and made a brief comeback during the 1920s in conjunction with the Art Deco style and the national fascination with the 1922 discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb. At no time, however, could it approach the predominance of the other classical revivals.

Much speculation exists as to how Knipe determined that this monumental structure should be executed in the enigmatic Egyptian Revival. Historian Ted Siefer, in his "History of the Tempe National Bank Building" notes that several of the bank's founders were members of the Masonic society wherein Egyptian symbolism is common to both buildings and ritual. Mr. Siefer also notes the bank's ties to agriculture and, at the time of construction, increasingly to cotton.

## **Integrity**

Now hidden beneath a stucco skin, the Tempe National Bank building was originally detailed and constructed in the Egyptian Revival style. Through a series of remodeling episodes begun in 1950 and culminating in 1976, many of the architectural details of the original structure have been compromised beyond recovery. The 2006 Interpretive Rehabilitation completed by Siefer Associates returns many of the characteristic features to view while avoiding patronizing reconstructions that could create a false sense of history. The result is a balanced rendering of new and old expressions carefully laid down on the historic structure that retains its original scale, massing, and orientation while continuing to function as a successful commercial property at the core of historic Mill Avenue.

In a recent interview for the Tempe Town News, the architect explains "The National Bank building is part of what gives Tempe its uniqueness. There was talk of tearing it down and we felt strongly that it should be preserved as the southern gateway to historic Tempe. Wherever possible we've kept original features, like the windows, the arches, and the exposed brick interior. We were very excited to discover that the original sign plate on front of the building was in near perfect condition after removing layers of stucco. Where preservation wasn't possible, we used an abstract interpretation. For example, the columns are replicated in the same proportions but we didn't duplicate the ornate decoration. That way people won't interpret them as originals."

The issue of lost integrity is central to the discussion of local register eligibility for the Tempe National Bank building. This report argues that the 2006 interpretive rehabilitation has preserved the 1912 structure and successfully maintained the character and feeling of the street at this location thereby providing adequate basis for eligibility. SHPO Architect and CLG Coordinator Bob Frankeberger (602) 542-6943 supported this position in dialog with the Keeper of the National Register in 2005. A formal request for a determination of eligibility was not pursued, however.

While architectural details are gone, the original 1912 structure stands intact, maintaining the same scale and massing at this prominent corner that has existed for the past 94 years. As downtown Tempe continually changes, even modified surviving historic resources help connect the heart of our community to its roots and origins. Those few properties that survive deserve recognition and support through the process of local historic designation.

## **Significance**

This property is historically significant. From its establishment in 1901, the bank operated under the control and direction of some of the community's most intrepid pioneers. First stockholders were: W. A. Bolton, M. E. Curry, Sr., Carl Hayden, C. G. Jones – President, Albert Miller, A. C. Ozanne – vice-president, Amanda Richards, William Rohrig, Wolf Sachs, Dr. M. J. Scroggs, E. W. Wilbur, W. H. Wilbur – cashier, and J. W. Woolf.

The purpose of this designation is to recognize a prominently located historic property in downtown Tempe, the Tempe National Bank building, the continued existence of which maintains an important, albeit abridged, reference to the rise of prosperity in Tempe during the early 1900's.

## Recommendation

Staff and the Redevelopment Review Commission recommends to the City Council that the Tempe National Bank Building be designated as Tempe Historic Property (#31) and that Historic Overlay Zoning be applied to the property.

## REASON(S) FOR APPROVAL:

1. The subject property meets the following criteria for designation, as found in section 14A-4 of the Tempe City Code.
  - (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; and
      - b. It represents an established and familiar visual feature of an area of the city, due to a prominent location or singular physical feature.
2. The Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval for the nomination that the Tempe National Bank building be designated as a historic property and listed on the Tempe Historic Property Register.

## CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

None

## HISTORY & FACTS:

January 4, 1901	Tempe National Bank established by pioneer Tempe businessmen and agriculturalists.
March 15, 1901	Tempe National Bank opened for business in the offices of bank president C. G. Jones located at the Miller Block building on the southeast corner of Fifth Street and Mill Avenue.
December, 1901	Year-end deposits reported at \$46,733 with loans of \$51,405 indicating rigorous investments. Gross earnings reported at \$4,435 net \$1,733 and surplus \$385.
October 27, 1911	Tempe Daily News reports W. J. Rifley of Phoenix is building contractor for new Tempe National Bank building. L. G. Knipe of Phoenix is architect (TDN 01/26/12). Fixtures installed (TDN 05/17/12)
June 28, 1912	Tempe National Bank opens new building at Sixth Street and Mill Avenue, staff stayed until 9:30 at night to accommodate the crowds.
1921	Perry & Company, an insurance and surety bonds company specializing in cotton crop insurance, moves into the Tempe National Bank building.
1923	Intermountain Building & Loan Association of Salt Lake City establishes a local agency office in the Tempe National Bank building.

- 1930 Tempe National Bank building extensively remodeled, although the original entrance façade remains intact.
- 1935 First National Bank of Arizona merged with the Phoenix National Bank, purchased the Tempe National Bank, the Miners and Merchants Bank of Bisbee, and the Phoenix Savings Bank & Trust Company.
- 1947 Proposed alterations to the Tempe Branch of the First National Bank of Arizona by Phoenix architects Lescher and Mahoney.
- 1949 Architectural and Engineering plans for remodeling completed by the Capital Company of San Francisco. L.H. & B.L. Nishkian, Consulting Engineers.
- 1950 Extensive renovation removes or obscures Egyptian Revival detailing leaving the building virtually unrecognizable, save for its overall form, massing, and orientation.
- Sept. 16, 1950 Open House: "First National Now Offers Tempe Area The Best In Modern Banking". Noted were the modern stainless steel vault doors and air conditioning of the latest design. – TDN Advertisement
- 1960 Architectural remodel and expansion plans completed by the First National Bank of Arizona Construction Division depict a modern appearance. "Tempe Head Office Additions and Alterations" drawings stamped by Melvin S. Buros, R.A., and Herbert A. Buros, P.E. Civil.
- 1961 Construction completed on remodel and addition.
- 1976 Exterior and interior remodel by First National Bank.
- 1986 Interior remodel only by First Interstate Bank.
- 1992 Minor remodel by the Archus Group for First Interstate Bank.
- 1998 Minor remodel by the Wagner Partnership for Wells Fargo Bank.
- August 8, 2000 Michael Wilson Kelly completes building condition survey for MCW Holdings, LLC.
- February 5, 2004 Tempe City Council approves up to \$25,000 of City General Funds for structural conditions study by 526 Mill LLC.
- November 21, 2005 The City of Tempe Development Services Department Design Review Board staff approved a request for the addition of awnings to the south and west elevations of the Tempe National Bank building.
- 2006 Interpretive Rehabilitation completed by Siefer Associates for 526 Mill LLC.
- March 9, 2006 The Tempe Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval of the present request.
- March 21, 2006 The Tempe Redevelopment Review Commission recommended approval of the present request.

**DESCRIPTION:**

Owner – 526 Mill, LLC  
 Applicant – Historic Preservation Commission, Joe Nucci  
 Existing zoning – CC – City Center Zoning District

Total site area – .21 acres

ORDINANCE NO. 2006.19

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TEMPE, ARIZONA, AMENDING THE CITY OF TEMPE ZONING MAP, PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT CODE PART 2, CHAPTER 1, SECTION 2-106 AND 2-107, RELATING TO THE LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES OF DISTRICTS.

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BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TEMPE, ARIZONA, as follows:

**Section 1.** That the City of Tempe Zoning Map is hereby amended, pursuant to the provisions of Zoning and Development Code, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 2-106 and 2-107, by historic designation on approximately .21 acres.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Part Lot 10 S 4", Part Lot 11, N 22' 8", Part Lot 12 S 35' 4", of E Block 4, of Tempe Townsite, according to Book 2, of Maps, Page 26, records of Maricopa County, Arizona

TOTAL AREA IS .21 GROSS ACRES.

**Section 2.** Further, those conditions of approval imposed by the City Council as part of **Case #HPO-2006.16** are hereby expressly incorporated into and adopted as part of this ordinance by this reference.

**Section 3.** Pursuant to City Charter, Section 2.12, ordinances are effective thirty (30) days after adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TEMPE, ARIZONA, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

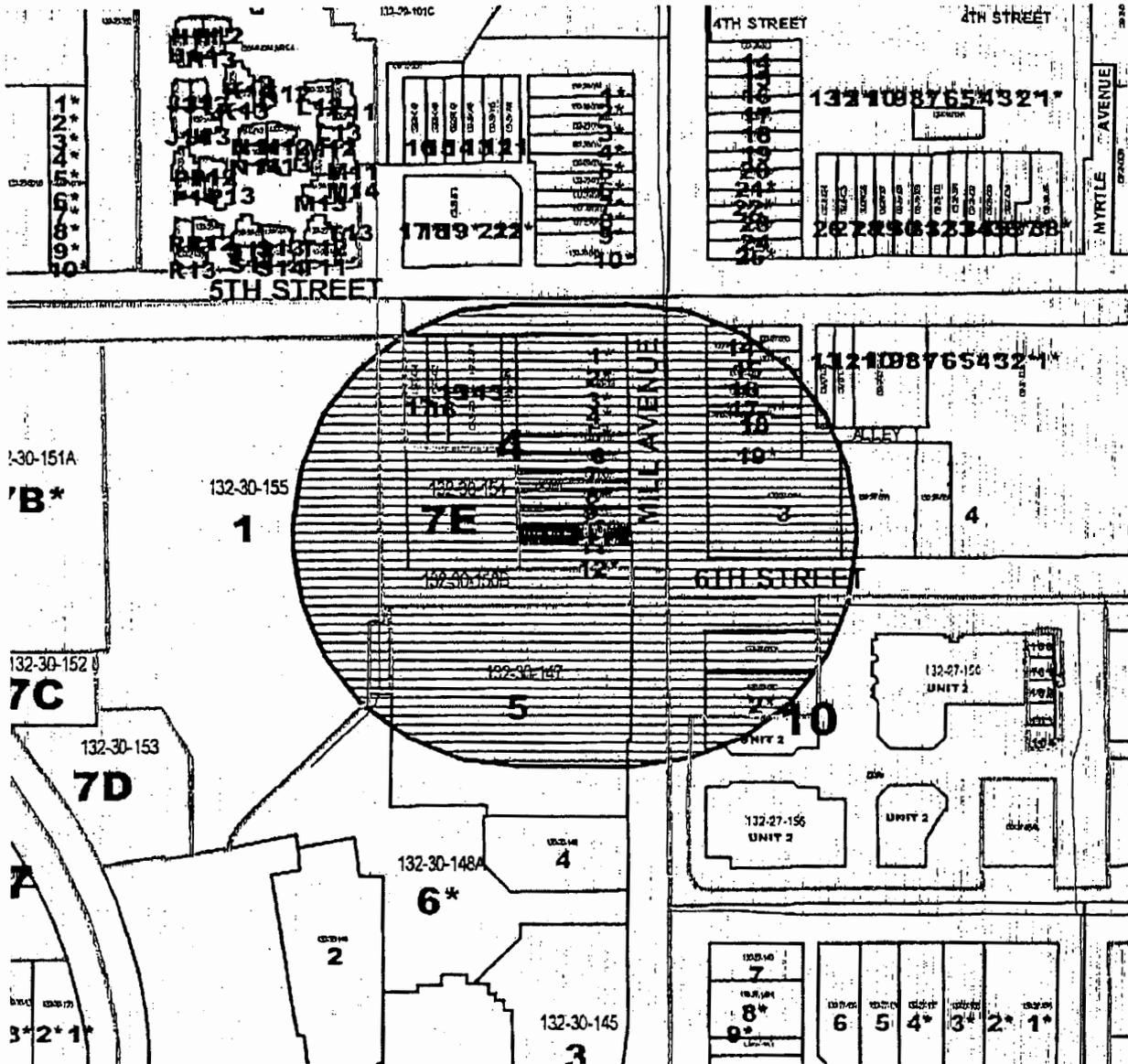
ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney

TEMPE HISTORIC PROPERTY REGISTER HISTORIC PROPERTY DESIGNATION  
 Tempe National Bank Building 526 South Mill Avenue 132 20 008 & 009



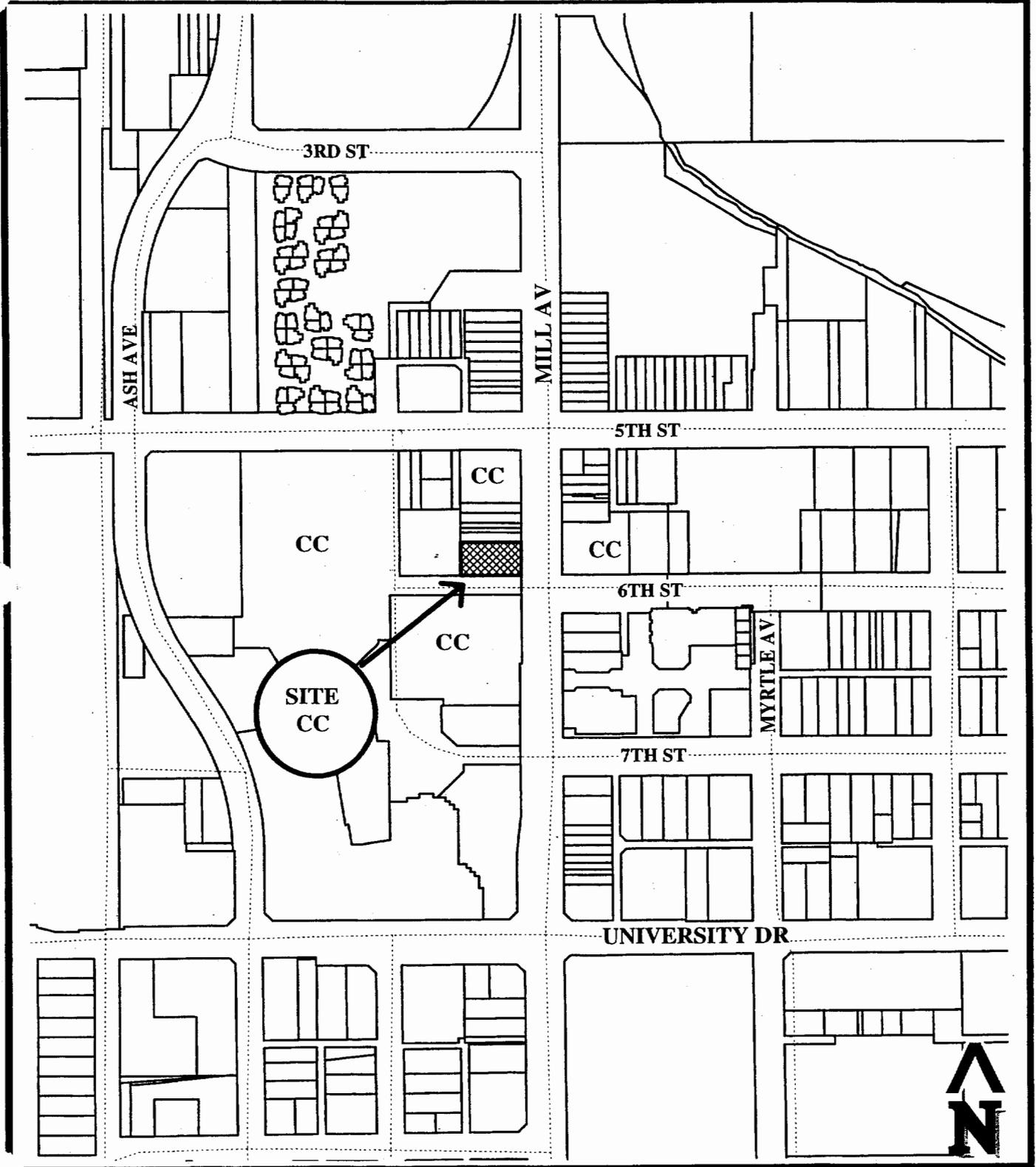
LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Part Lot 10 S 4", Part Lot 11, N 22' 8", Part Lot 12 S 35' 4", of E Block 4, of Tempe Townsite, according to Book 2, of Maps, Page 26, records of Maricopa County, Arizona

132 30 008 & 132 30 009

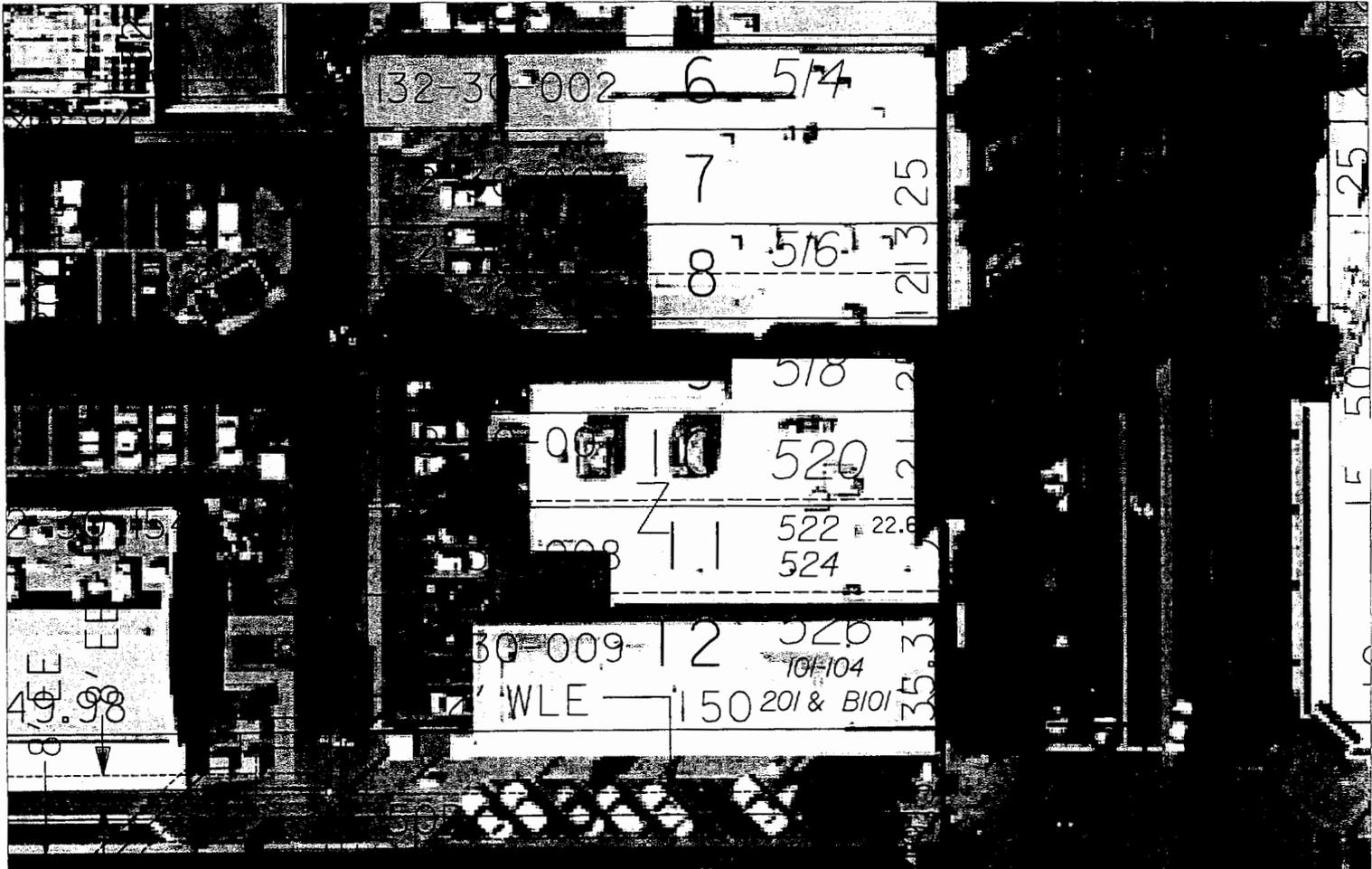
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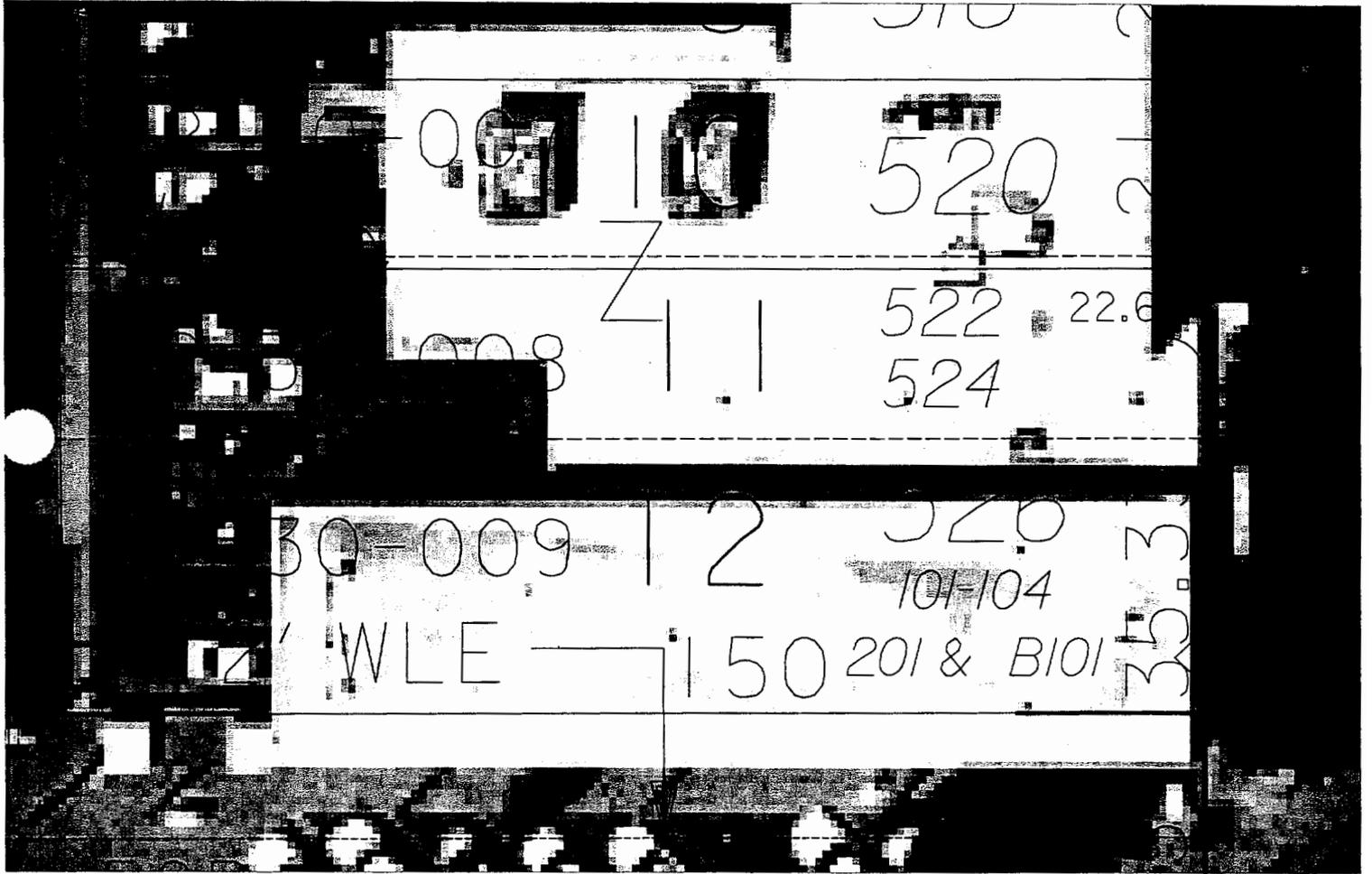
**TEMPE NATIONAL BANK BUILDING**

**RRC 06003  
HPO-2006.16**



**Location Map**





526 Mill LLC

520 S. Mill Avenue, Suite 301

Tempe, AZ 85281

t. 480 966-0812 f. 480 967-7281

email [sieferassociates@quest.net](mailto:sieferassociates@quest.net)

Joseph Nucci, Historic Preservation Officer  
City of Tempe, Historic Preservation Office  
21 E. 6th Street Suite 208  
Tempe, AZ 85280

January 25, 2006

Re: Tempe National Bank Building

Dear Mr. Nucci:

By this letter, I am pleased to submit the Tempe National Bank Building, 526 S. Mill Avenue, for consideration on the Tempe Historic Property Register. This building, originally constructed in 1912, is of historical significance to Tempe not only for its distinctive architectural qualities but also for its connection to important early Tempe leaders such as Carl Hayden, Dr. B.B. Moeur and architect L.G. Knipe. Its value to the local community was expressed by the local newspaper, the Tempe News shortly after its opening when it enthusiastically declared, "No other town the size of Tempe in the world can boast of as fine a bank building or as thoroughly equipped a banking institution as The Tempe National Bank".

Although much of its original architectural fabric was removed during its 1950 remodeling, in our just completed rehabilitation we attempted to restore most of the façade to its original proportion and scale, interpreted in a contemporary perspective. Where possible, we salvaged some of the few remaining historic fragments for public viewing such as the original "Tempe National Bank" sign, wall papered and painted Egyptian motifs, portions of the original ceramic mosaic flooring and of the original gray cement brick, most of which was destroyed during the 1950 remodel.

Despite the loss of much of the original fabric, we believe that the essence of this important historic building remains and taken in the context of other historic properties on this block, it offers the public a glimpse of what old Tempe was like. We therefore believe that this building is worthy of historic status and request your support in granting it a place on the Tempe Historic Property Register.

Very truly yours,

Stuart Siefer, Architect and Managing Member of 526 Mill LLC.

## REFERENCES:

- Akers, John H. – 2005: quoted in “Phoenix Then and Now”, Paul Scharbach and John H. Akers: Thunder Bay Press, San Diego, CA.
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- Garrison, Jim – 2006: “State Historic Preservation Office Opinion – Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance Section 14A-4”, email 02/02/2006 11:50 a.m.
- Hughes, Paul – 1971: “Bank Notes” history of the First National Bank of Arizona, Phoenician Books.
- Kelley, Michael Wilson – 2000: “Tempe National Bank August 8, 2000 MCW Holdings, LLC” Unpublished manuscript – Tempe Historic Preservation Office.
- McClintock, James H. – 1916: “Arizona, Prehistoric, Aboriginal, Pioneer, Modern Volumes 1 & 2” – S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago.
- Peplow, Edward H., Jr. – 1970: “The Taming of the Salt”, Salt River Project, Phoenix.
- Plaza-Manning, Heather – 1999: “Egyptian Revival Style related to the history of American Architecture”, Thesis – Historic Preservation Program School of the Art Institute, Chicago.
- Siefer, Stu – 2005: quoted in “Tempe National Bank building gets facelift”, Tempe Town News Volume 2, Issue 12, December 2005.
- Siefer, Ted – 2003: “Buried Treasure; a history of the Tempe National Bank Building”, Unpublished manuscript – Tempe Historic Preservation Office.
- Solliday, Scott – 2001: “Tempe Post World War II Subdivision Study”, Tempe Historic Preservation Office.
- Tempe Daily News: Articles 09/15/1950; 09/16/1950;
- Vinson, Mark (Ed.) – 2003: “Three Decades of Development; Tempe downtown redevelopment guide”, Community Development Department, Tempe.



