

PHOENIX HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Proposed Historic Preservation (HP)  
Overlay Zoning for Papago Park  
Case No. 35-89-6 for June 26, 1989 Meeting

BACKGROUND

In an effort to more effectively preserve, protect, and manage historic resources owned by the City of Phoenix, an historical/architectural survey of City-owned properties was initiated in June, 1986. The purposes of the survey was to: (1) provide a comprehensive inventory of structures built before 1946; (2) to evaluate and identify significant historic resources worthy of listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the Phoenix Historic Property Register; (3) to utilize the information as a basis for compliance review of federally assisted projects; and (4) to further enhance significant historic properties through effective planning and management.

The survey identified a diverse range of City-owned historic resources illustrative of the development of Phoenix from 1868 to 1946. One of the most significant is Papago Park.

HISTORY

Papago Park was first designated as the Papago Saguaro National Monument by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1914 (see attached Map #1). Its sandstone geographic formations, surrounded by saguaro cacti and other characteristic desert vegetation was recognized as a distinctive landmark of the Salt River Valley. The Monument, which encompassed roughly six sections of land, was abolished by the U.S. Congress and deeded to the State of Arizona for public use in 1932.

The Arizona Fish and Game Department was given responsibility for the management of the land. In March 1932, the Department requested that approximately two hundred acres be set aside for use as a state-run bass hatchery. The plan for the hatchery included a chain of eight lakes for spawning and growing small-mouth bass to stock the various lakes throughout the state. At the time of its dedication on December 19, 1932, it was the largest state-owned bass hatchery in the United States. The site of Governor Hunt's tomb, it was named the Hunt Bass Hatchery. During the dedication of the hatchery, E.E. Lane, who was chairman of the Parks and Playgrounds Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, advocated having the area around the hatchery developed for recreational purposes.

After the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in March 1933, the State Fish and Game Department made application to the Department of the Interior for a CCC camp at Papago Park. The purpose was to build additional lakes and an administrative compound for the Hunt Bass Hatchery and construct a number of support and recreational improvements for the park. The "Jack Swilling" CCC construction camp was established at the park in October, 1933. During the first season two hundred CCC workers were camped at Papago Park. They constructed picnic table ramadas, roadways, and a three thousand seat

amphitheater, located on the north slope of a butte just south of Barnes Butte and McDowell Road. Designed by resident National Park Service (NPS) architect, J.J. Powers and NPS landscape architect, Paul Kraus, and built without mechanical tools, the amphitheater was "a gift to Phoenix and the Salt River Valley from the federal government."

Powers and Kraus also designed eleven picnic table ramada structures which were built adjacent to the western edge of the lakes development. Landscaping surrounding the lakes also was undertaken during this time. Also constructed was the dam for the seventh lake at the Bass Hatchery, which was dedicated in 1934.

In March 1935, CCC workers began construction of the restroom building, a park administration building (now known as the "Stone House" at the Phoenix Zoo), a new water distribution system, and a stone boathouse. The eighth lake in the chain also was built. By November 1937, most of the improvements undertaken by the CCC had been completed.

In 1939 a large tract of land was set aside in Papago Park to serve as a botanical garden for desert plants. Webster Auditorium was constructed to serve as an office and living quarters for the Garden Director, guest quarters for visiting scientists and public meeting space. Named for Gertrude Divine Webster, a wealthy matron and early director of the Arizona Cactus and Native Flora Society, the auditorium was constructed of adobe with pine vigas in the Santa Fe style. Designed by Charles Gibbs Adams, the building was dedicated on January 21, 1940.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Generally Papago Park, including the Phoenix Zoo, is significant for its association with the Papago Saguaro National Monument, the Hunt Bass Hatchery, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and early efforts to develop a multi-use desert park. The natural setting of the park with its sandstone geologic formations, desert flora, and manmade lakes create a unique environment that is representative of the effects of state-sponsored wildlife conservation programs, regional recreational development and the influence of the CCC and NPS on parks development in the Salt River Valley.

As a result of the CCC's work, Papago Park contains numerous examples of historic construction methods and workmanship. Primarily constructed of stone, these historic features include the amphitheater, ramadas, small culverts, walls, bridges and stone-lined concrete waterways or canals that interconnect the lakes. The Depression-era improvements are important remaining examples of the early landscape and architectural philosophies that guided the original park development and utilized native materials to create designs that harmonized with the natural surroundings.

The Stone House at the Phoenix Zoo is significant for its association with the development of the Hunt Bass Hatchery which was a major element of the Arizona Game and Fish Department's program to develop recreational lakes throughout the state. The structure also is architecturally significant for its intact representation of the design, materials and workmanship that distinguished early park architecture.

Webster Auditorium is significant for its architecture and its association with the development of scientific interest in the desert environment and the preservation and study of desert flora. The building also is important for its association with Gertrude Webster who was instrumental in the development of the Desert Botanical Garden.

Governor Hunt's Tomb is significant both as a local landmark and as the final resting place of Arizona's first governor.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Due to its historic, architectural and landscape architecture significance, it is recommended that Papago Park be designated on the Phoenix Historic Property Register, in its entirety. However, as the park contains vacant land as well as many modern improvements, it is recommended that reviews by the Historic Preservation Commission and its staff for "Certificate of Appropriateness" and "Demolition" permits be limited only to those actions which would impact the identified historic resources of the park. These resources include:

Site Survey  
No.

- |        |     |  |
|--------|-----|--|
|        | 1.  | Webster Auditorium                         |
| 291-15 | 2.  | Governor Hunt's Tomb                       |
| 291-14 | 3.  | Hunt Bass Hatchery Administration Building |
| 291-13 | 4.  | Papago Park Amphitheater                   |
| 291-1  | 5.  | Papago Park Table Ramada #3                |
| 291-2  | 6.  | Papago Park Table Ramada #4                |
| 291-3  | 7.  | Papago Park Table Ramada #5                |
| 291-4  | 8.  | Papago Park Table Ramada #6                |
| 291-5  | 9.  | Papago Park Table Ramada #7                |
| 291-6  | 10. | Papago Park Table Ramada #8                |
| 291-7  | 11. | Papago Park Table Ramada #9                |
| 291-8  | 12. | Papago Park Table Ramada #10               |
| 291-9  | 13. | Papago Park Table Ramada #13               |
| 291-10 | 14. | Papago Park Table Ramada #14               |
| 291-11 | 15. | Papago Park Table Ramada #15               |

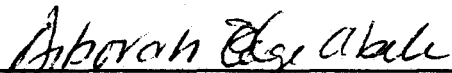
Additionally, of importance are the intact examples of CCC craftsmanship located within the park including the stone walls, bridges and waterways. The location of these features are noted on aerial photographs which will be on file both at the Planning and Parks Departments.

In summary, staff recommends that the Commission:

Approve Historic Preservation Overlay zoning for Papago Park and its noted significant features, as indicated on the attached Map #2.

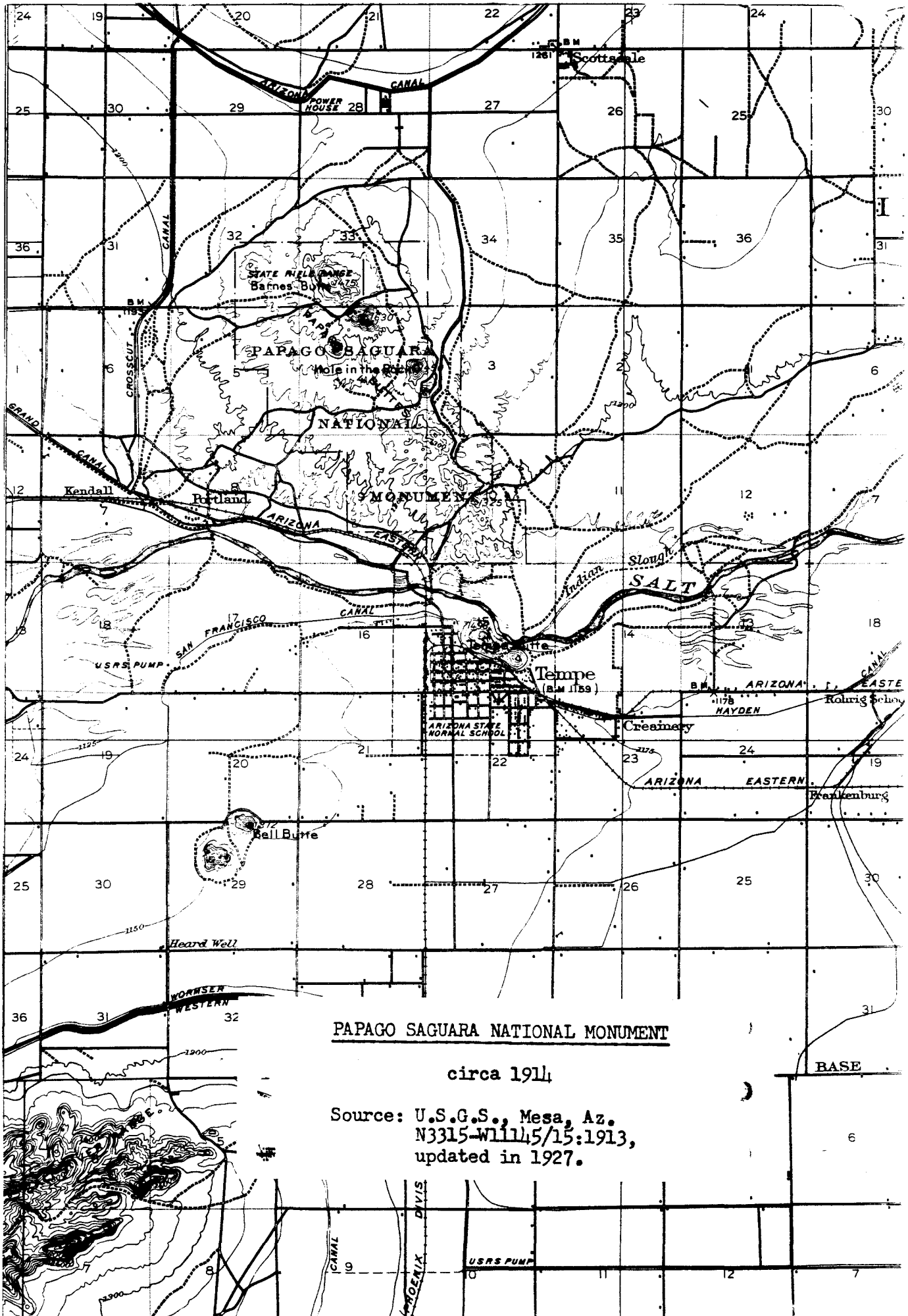
Transmit a recommendation to the Planning Commission that Papago Park receive Historic Preservation Overlay zoning, as proposed

Direct staff to prepare design guidelines for Papago Park which will assist Parks Department staff and the general public in understanding and preserving the significant historic features of the park.

  
Deborah Edge Abele  
Historic Preservation Officer

DEA:WEJ:3096vjv/HP#6

Attachments

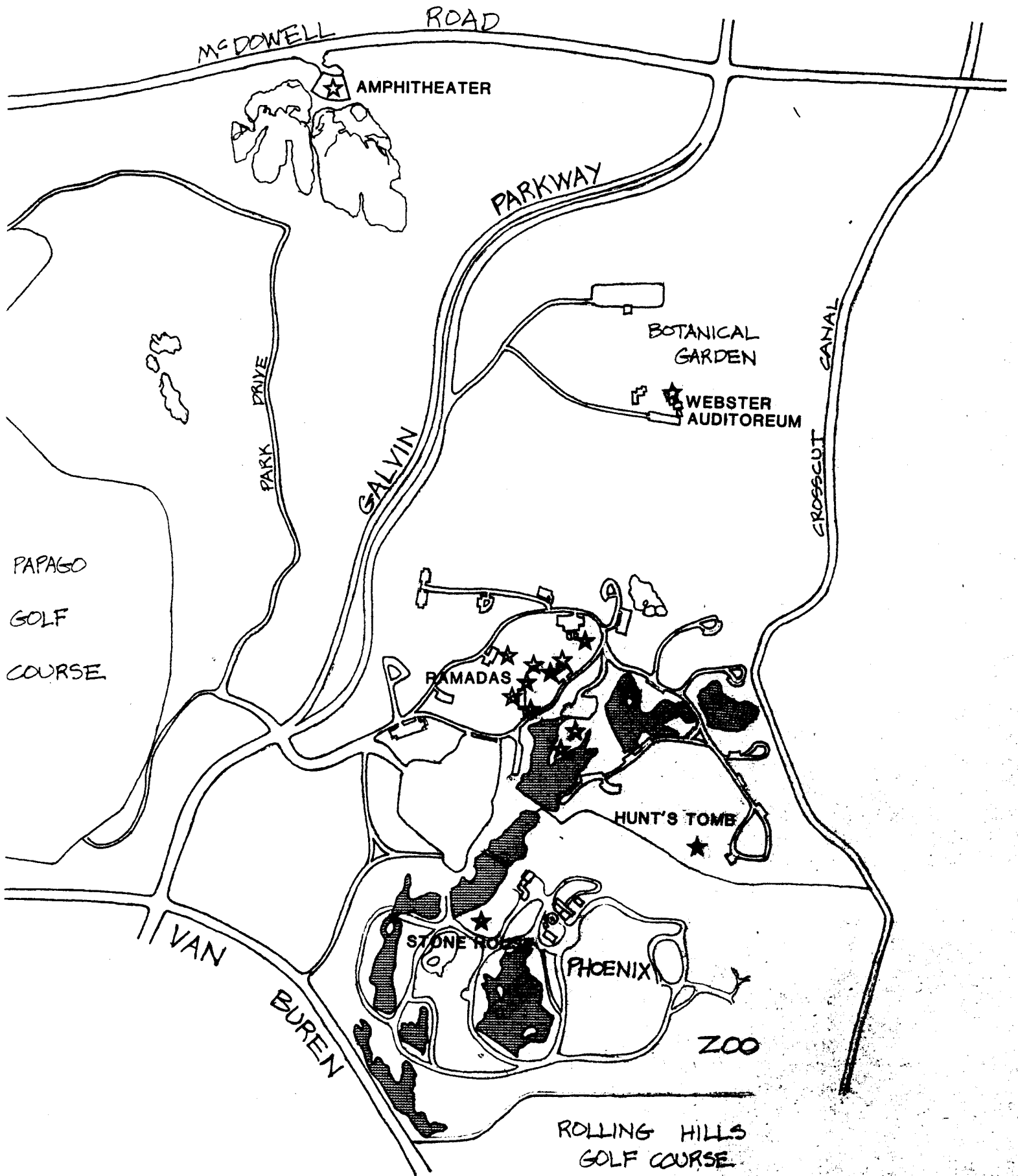


**PAPAGO SAGUARA NATIONAL MONUMENT**

circa 1911

Source: U.S.G.S., Mesa, Az.  
N3315-W11145/15:1913,  
updated in 1927.

BASE



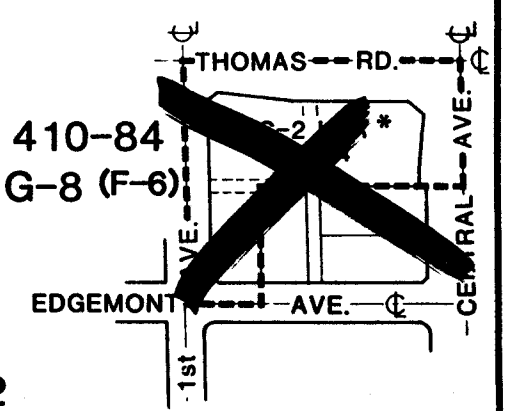
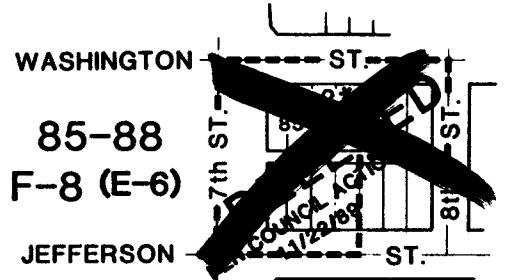
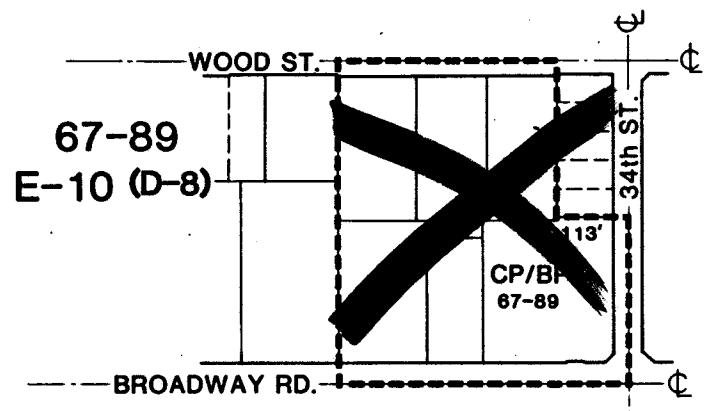
# OFFICIAL SUPPLEMENTARY ZONING MAP NO. 840

## AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. G-449 AMENDED BY ORDINANCE NO. G-3282

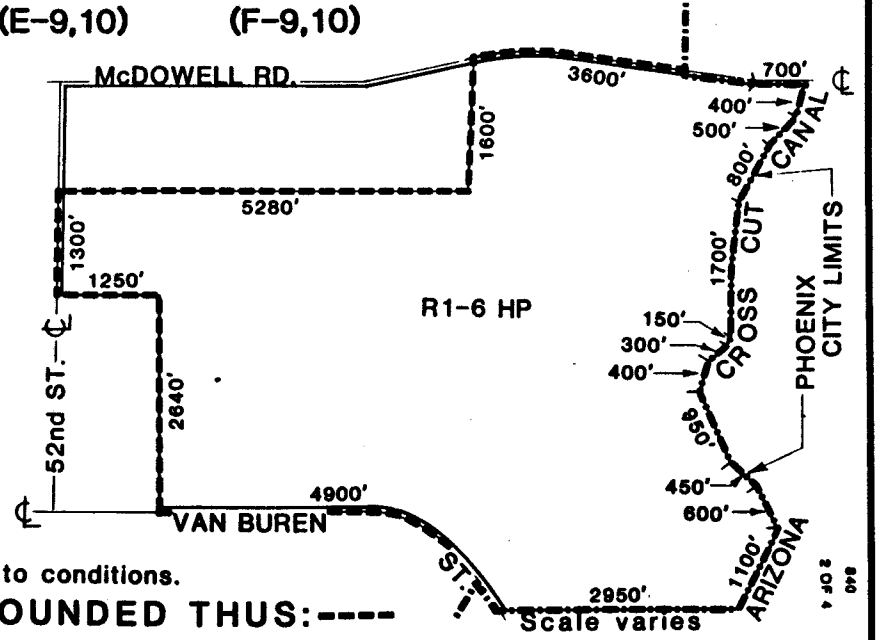
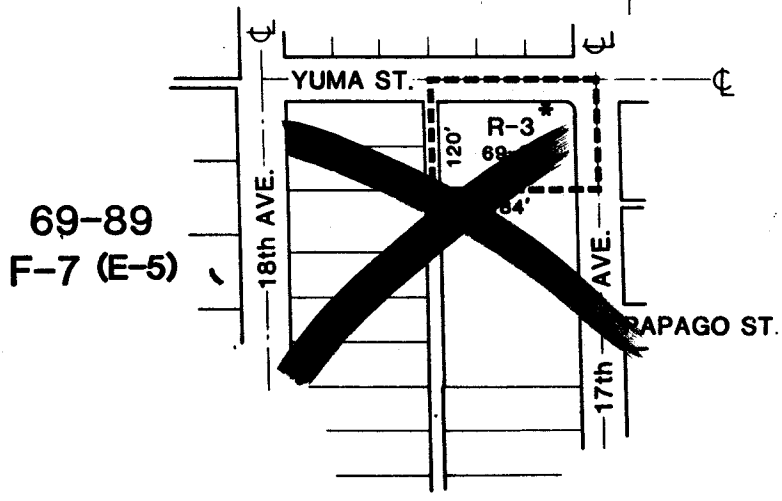
Passed by the Council of the City of Phoenix, Arizona this 22nd day of November 1989

[Signature]  
Mayor

[Signature]  
ACTING City Clerk



35-89  
F-11,12 & G-11,12  
(E-9,10) (F-9,10)



\* Zoning subject to conditions.

AREA INVOLVED BOUNDED THUS: ---

Drawn By J.G.  
Checked By J.N.

Scale varies