

TCC Today



TUCSON  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION  
FOUNDATION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

“TUCSON COMMUNITY CENTER (TCC) HISTORIC DISTRICT LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE”

**September 11, 2015 (Tucson)** - The Tucson Community Center Historic District, located in downtown Tucson, Arizona, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on September 8, 2015. According to Charles Birnbaum, President of the Cultural Landscape Foundation, “This design ranks in the top tier of Modernist work, one of the most significant designed landscapes in the American Southwest.”

The Tucson Community Center Historic District is composed of three sections: the landscape surrounding the Arena, Music Hall and Leo Rich Theater; the walkway between the hotel and La Placita Village; and Veinte de Agosto Park. The Convention Center or Arena lies in the southern section of the district.

“The Tucson Community Center Historic District has been listed at the national level of significance because of its importance to the history of landscape architecture in the United States,” said Helen Erickson, who prepared the nomination for the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation in partnership with TCC Today, “This is a monumental recognition of a historic asset that many in the community have overlooked” she said.

“This is the culmination of years of dedicated work led by Helen Erickson,” said Demion Clinco, Executive Director of the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation. “All too often Tucson forgets we have these incredible historic gems, sometimes hidden right before our eyes,” he said.

**Background**

Designed by world-renowned Modernist landscape architect Garrett Eckbo (1910-2000) at the height of his career, the Tucson Community Center Historic District was completed in three stages in 1971, 1973 and 1974 under the project direction of two of Tucson’s

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première architectural firms, Friedman & Jobusch, and Cain Nelson Ware. The landscape is the only Eckbo-designed urban civic space in Arizona and one of only four large urban designs that were completed during the landscape architect's long career.

Professor Lauri Macmillan Johnson, Director of the School of Landscape Architecture and Planning at the University of Arizona, notes the importance of Garrett Eckbo's contributions to the Modernist experimental style of landscape architecture. "This avant-garde asymmetrical style discarded the formal geometry of Beaux Arts neoclassicism in favor of spatial layouts inspired by nature and characterized by abstraction of form and experimentation with materials. These modern examples can be modified through design adjustments to preserve historic significance while also providing adaptive reuse and strategies for the energy and water conservation sought by today's landscape architecture profession. As a nationally significant project, the Tucson Community Center Historic District is an invaluable point of reference in the history of American landscape architecture."

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

### **TCC Today**

TCC Today, a volunteer community organization, advocates for restoration of the Tucson Community Center Historic District and associated performance venues. To illustrate the rehabilitation potential, visual appeal and community benefits of the landscape, TCC Today has worked towards the of two demonstration areas on site. The first was completed in October 2014; the second will be completed in October 2015. The National Register listing will be celebrated with a ribbon-cutting for Demonstration Area II and picnic on the plaza on October 17th, followed by the Tucson Symphony Orchestra's first pops concert of the season.

### **The Tucson Symphony Orchestra**

As an active partner in the work of TCC Today, the TSO has helped to raise awareness of the relationship of the landscape and improvements to the Music Hall and Leo Rich Theater. Mark Blakeman, President and CEO, notes, "The endorsement of the National Register gives credibility to the district as an important destination and setting for Tucson and the TCC campus. A fully restored plaza would set a tone for entrance to the Music Hall and Leo Rich Theater for arts and cultural activities. Seating niches, shade and the relaxing soundscape of rushing fountain waters will enhance the overall patron experience from the moment they arrive until the last note of the concert."

### **Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation and Modernism Week**

The Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation, founded in 1985, is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the distinctive and irreplaceable historic resources of Tucson, Pima County and Southern Arizona. Historic preservation is an essential component of our city. In an

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effort to highlight the designation of this important property the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation is holding Tucson Modernism Week, October 2-10, at the Tucson Community Center with tours and lectures about the landscape. See [tucsonmod.com](http://tucsonmod.com) for more information.

TCC Today, the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, and the Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation advocate the passage of all seven of the Pima County Bond proposals on November 3, 2015. Proposition 427.9 will provide funding for further rehabilitation of the landscape, Music Hall and Leo Rich Theater.

To make a donation to help save this important landscape, visit [TCCToday.org](http://TCCToday.org).

Photo opportunities and stock photography are available upon request. Historic photo is courtesy of Tucson Historic Preservation Foundation; other photos by fotovitamina.

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