



City of Phoenix
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Staff Report: Z-31-20-7
July 16, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Z-31-20-7 is a request to establish Historic Preservation (HP) overlay zoning for the property located at the northwest corner of 22nd Avenue and McDowell Road [2202 West McDowell Road] known historically as the Produce Center Building. Maps and photos of the subject property are attached.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that rezoning request Z-31-20-7 be approved.

BACKGROUND

In November 2019, S. Emmanuel Petrus, representing the current property owner, Mountain Village Group Homes, Inc., contacted the City of Phoenix Historic Preservation Office to inquire about HP zoning for the subject property. After researching the property, staff made a recommendation on February 24, 2020 that it was eligible for historic designation. Mr. Petrus then submitted formal paperwork requesting that the City proceed with an application for HP zoning. At his request, the HP Commission voted to initiate HP zoning for the subject property on May 18, 2020.

PROPERTY HISTORY

In 1953, Phoenix businessman Ralph Eaton oversaw the construction of a two-story office building to support grower/shipper operations near the BNSF Railway's Mobest Yard. Eaton was a prominent vegetable grower and shipper and was also president of the Vegetable Growers Association, representing a \$20 million industry in the Salt River Valley.

An *Arizona Republic* article from July 12, 1953 notes that Eaton had already leased office space to several agriculture-related operations when construction of the building began. These tenants included the Stanley Fruit Company, the Federal Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Service, the Federal-State Market News Service, and the Arizona Fruit and Vegetable Standardization Service. The article states that "all of these offices originally were in the Security Building 20 years ago. The move is one that began several years ago, when the shipping firms began leaving their downtown offices and establishing suitable quarters at their shipping sheds." Eaton clearly sought to

capitalize on this trend as the article further noted that “several of the valley’s largest packing sheds are adjacent to the new Eaton building.” A second article dated January 31, 1954 announcing the building’s completion identified additional tenants as WESCO Foods Company, Atlantic Commission Company, Bemis Brothers Bag Company, and Pacific Fruit Express. The article stated the new building was now the “headquarters of the vegetable and melon growing and shipping industry” in Phoenix.

Eaton hired Phoenix architect Lester Laraway to design the new building. Laraway, who had worked in California for many years, came to Arizona in 1936 to work for the firm of Lescher & Mahoney. He later formed a partnership with Lester Byron before starting his own firm in 1947. Laraway designed municipal buildings, churches, and several elementary schools. The building was constructed by the Eaton Construction Company, also owned by Ralph Eaton, at a cost of \$80,000. Eaton’s construction firm also opened an office in the building after it was completed.

The two-story, rectangular-shaped Produce Center Building with central courtyard was completed in January of 1954. The July 12, 1953 *Arizona Republic* article discussing the proposed construction noted that the building would have “some interesting architectural features, such as the second-floor projecting on the east and south to give shade to the floor below, and the use of horizontal steel louvers to control direct sunlight through windows.” The January 31, 1954 article highlighted the landscaped patio at the courtyard and noted that interior balconies, reached by open stairways, served as hallways for second floor offices.

In the mid- to late 1960s, transportation and trucking companies began to locate in the building, with government agencies related to agriculture retaining a presence. However, by 1975 there were no agricultural-related firms or agencies remaining within the Produce Center Building. This reflected a broader decline in vegetable production in the Salt River Valley as total harvested acres of lettuce—a primary crop—dropped from 28,240 in 1965 to 11,300 by 1971.

The building continued to be used as offices for transportation and trucking companies into the 1980s. By the early 1990s, the building had been converted to an adult video store. In June 2019, the property was acquired by the current owners in June 2019 for use as an office.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria for HP overlay zoning and listing on the PHPR are set forth in Section 807.D of the City of Phoenix Zoning Ordinance. To qualify, a property must demonstrate significance in local, regional, state, or national history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture, according to one or more of the following criteria:

- A. The property is associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
- B. The property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. The property has yielded or may likely yield information integral to the understanding of our prehistory or history.

In addition to the significance requirement, the property must also be at least 50 years old or have achieved significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance. The property must also possess sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its significance.

EVALUATION

The design of the two-story, rectangular-shaped building remains intact, with its character-defining interior courtyard and second story projections on the eastern and southern facades. The primary alterations to the building have occurred with materials. The first-story section of the wall above the brick was a continuous line of framed windows. This section was framed in and covered with stucco sheathing. The original louvers over the second story windows were replaced with metal roll-down blinds; however, the blinds were recently removed, and the original windows are still intact.

Overall, the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a midcentury office building. While its Modern design is notable, the building's primary significance is under Criterion A for its association with agriculture in Phoenix during the mid-20th century. It was an important hub for agricultural activity during that time, and it represents the evolving patterns of commerce as activities moved from the downtown area to the emerging industrial zone along McDowell Road.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Section 807.E states that, when applying the evaluation criteria in Section 807.D, the boundaries of a historic district should be drawn as carefully as possible to ensure that:

1. The district contains documented historic, architectural, archaeological or natural resources;
2. The district boundaries coincide with documented historic boundaries such as early roadways, canals, subdivision plats or property lines;
3. Other district boundaries coincide with logical physical or manmade features and reflect recognized neighborhood or area boundaries; and

4. Other non-historic resources or vacant land is included where necessary to create appropriate boundaries to assist in meeting the criteria in Section 807.D.

The proposed HP zoning boundary encompasses 0.86 gross acres and includes the entire parcel, as well as the adjacent right of way, which is customary for rezoning cases. It coincides with documented historic boundaries as much as possible and follows parcel lines and street monument lines.

CONCLUSION

The rezoning request Z-31-20-7 to establish Historic Preservation (HP) overlay zoning for the subject property should be approved for the following reasons:

1. The property meets the significance, age, and integrity requirements for HP overlay zoning set forth in Section 807.D of the Zoning Ordinance; and
2. The proposed boundaries meet the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 807.E.

Writers

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7/16/20

Team Leader

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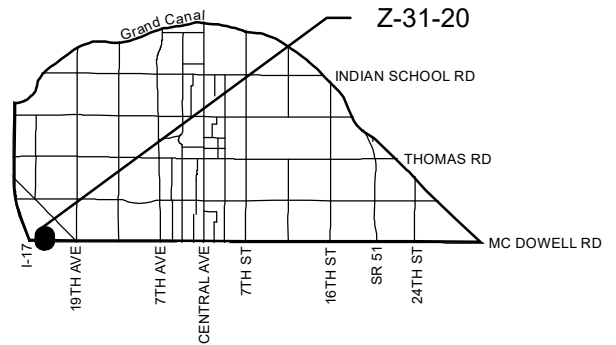
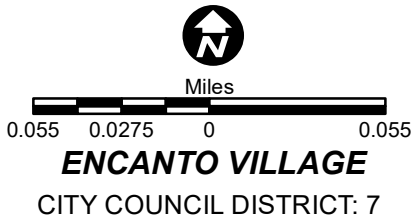
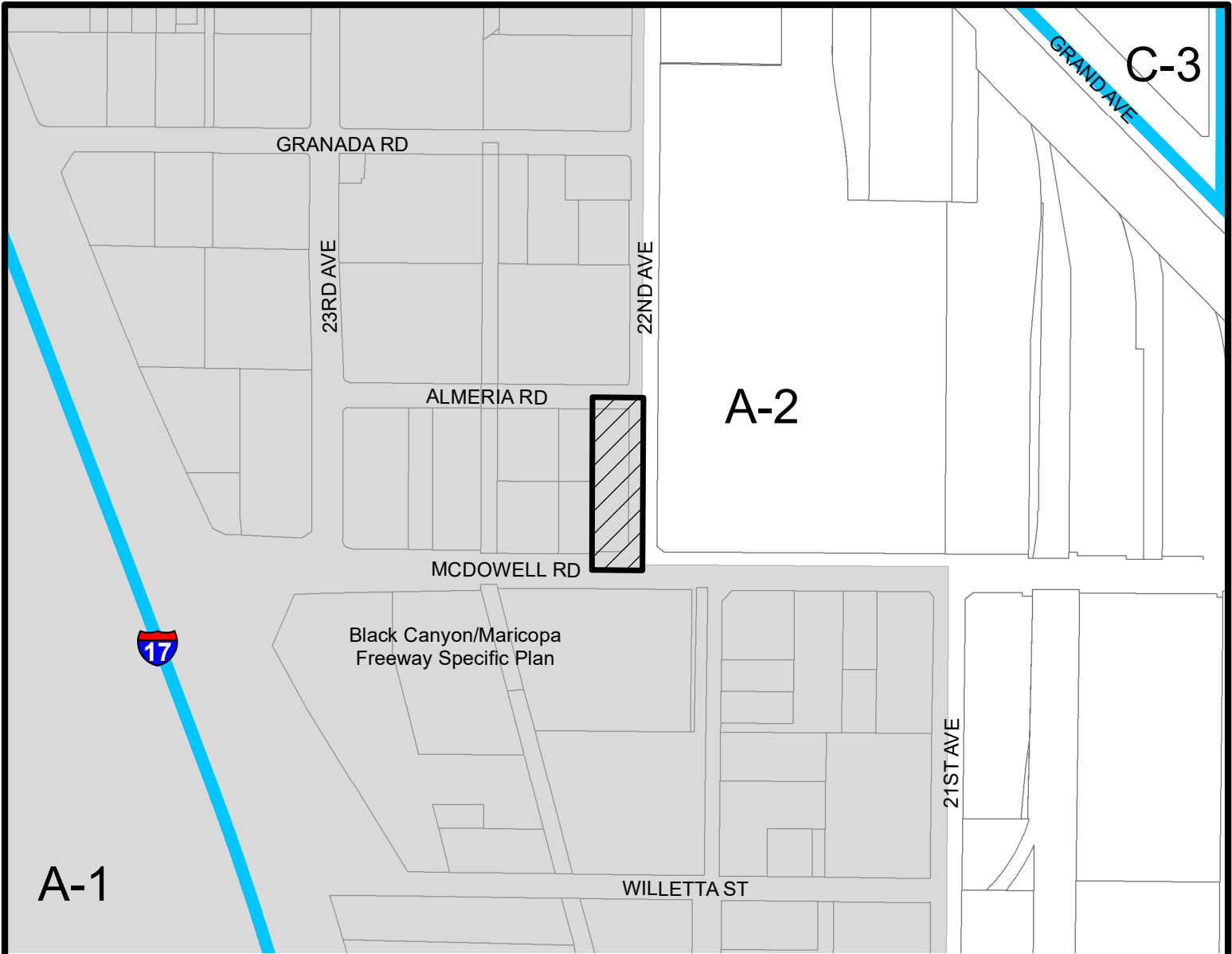
Attachments:

Sketch Map (1 page)

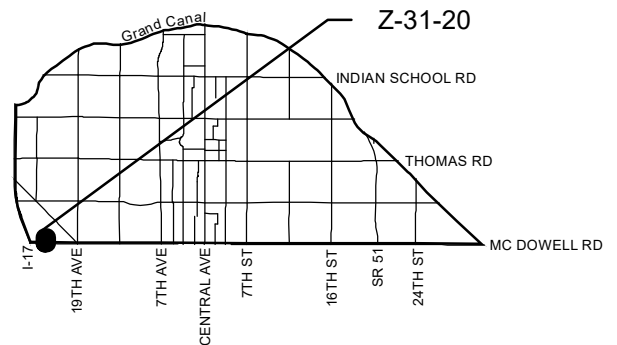
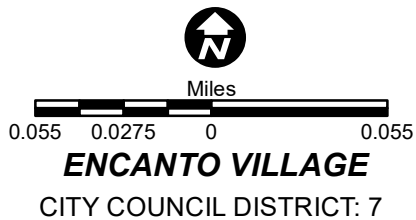
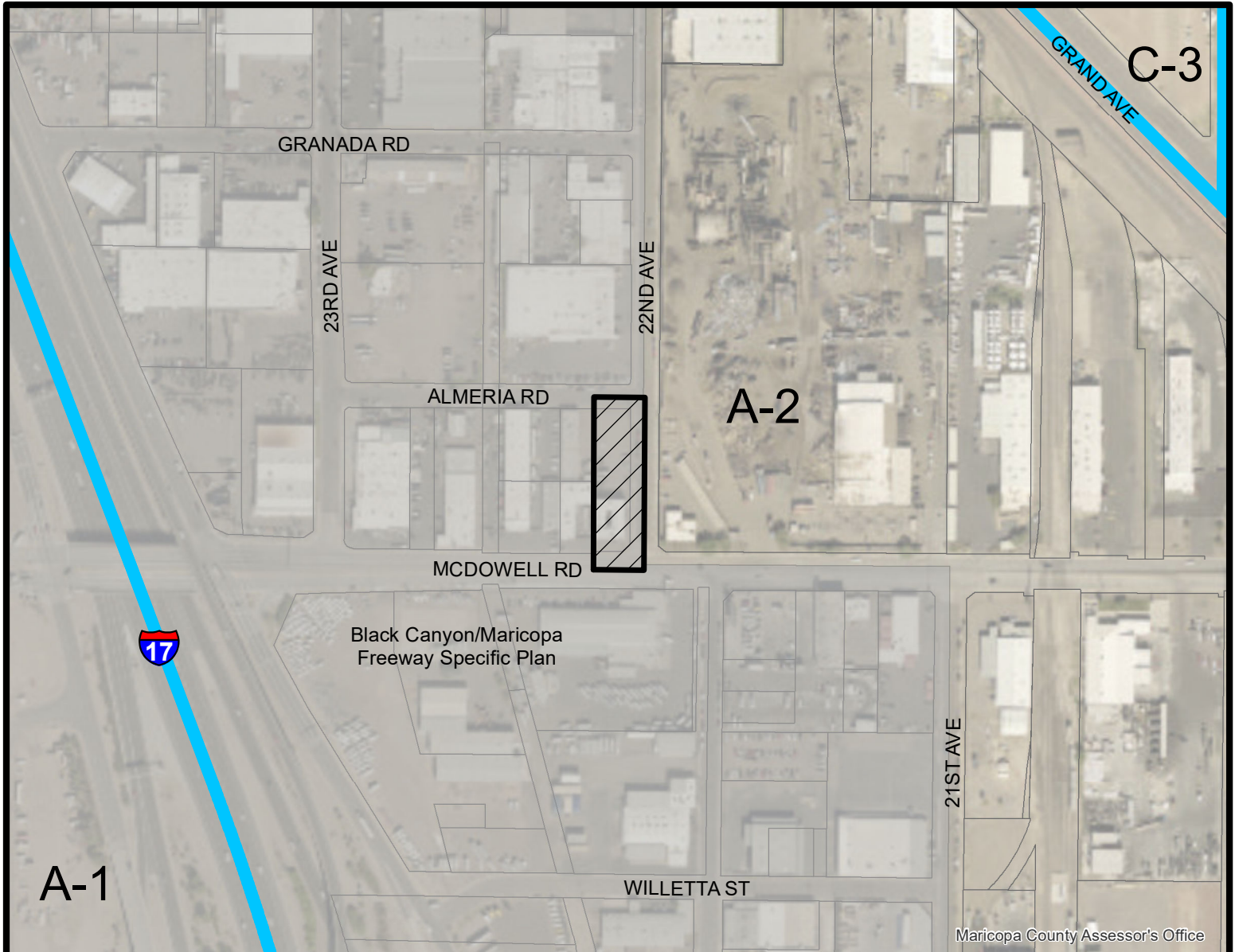
Aerials (2 pages)

Photos (4 pages)

Newspaper Articles (2 pages)



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| APPLICANT'S NAME: City of Phoenix Historic Preservation Commission | | REQUESTED CHANGE: | |
| APPLICATION NO. Z-31-20 | DATE: 6/22/2020 REVISION DATES: | FROM: A-2 (0.86 a.c.) | |
| GROSS AREA INCLUDING 1/2 STREET AND ALLEY DEDICATION IS APPROX. 0.86 Acres | AERIAL PHOTO & QUARTER SEC. NO. QS 13-24 | ZONING MAP G-7 | TO: A-2 HP (0.86 a.c.) |
| MULTIPLES PERMITTED A-2 A-2 HP | CONVENTIONAL OPTION N/A N/A | | * UNITS P.R.D. OPTION N/A N/A |
| * Maximum Units Allowed with P.R.D. Bonus | | | |



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Produce Center Building 2202 West McDowell Road

Proposed Historic Preservation (HP) Zoning Overlay

 2202 West McDowell Road

Z-31-20-7
2202 West McDowell Road
Produce Center Building

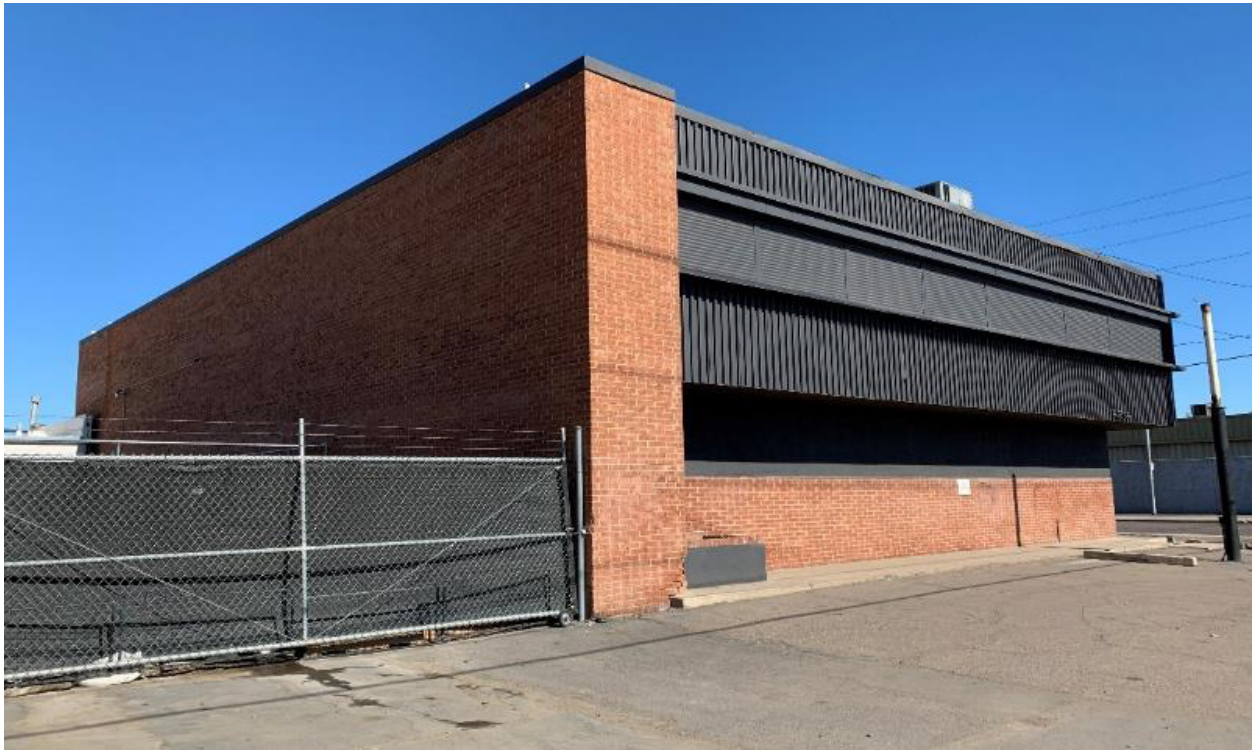


View of building from intersection of 22nd Avenue and McDowell Road, looking northwest, January 2020.



Southeast corner of building with gated entrance to interior courtyard located along eastern façade, looking northwest, January 2020

Z-31-20-7
2202 West McDowell Road
Produce Center Building



View of building from McDowell Road, looking northeast, January 2020



Northeast corner of building, looking southwest, January 2020

Z-31-20-7
2202 West McDowell Road
Produce Center Building

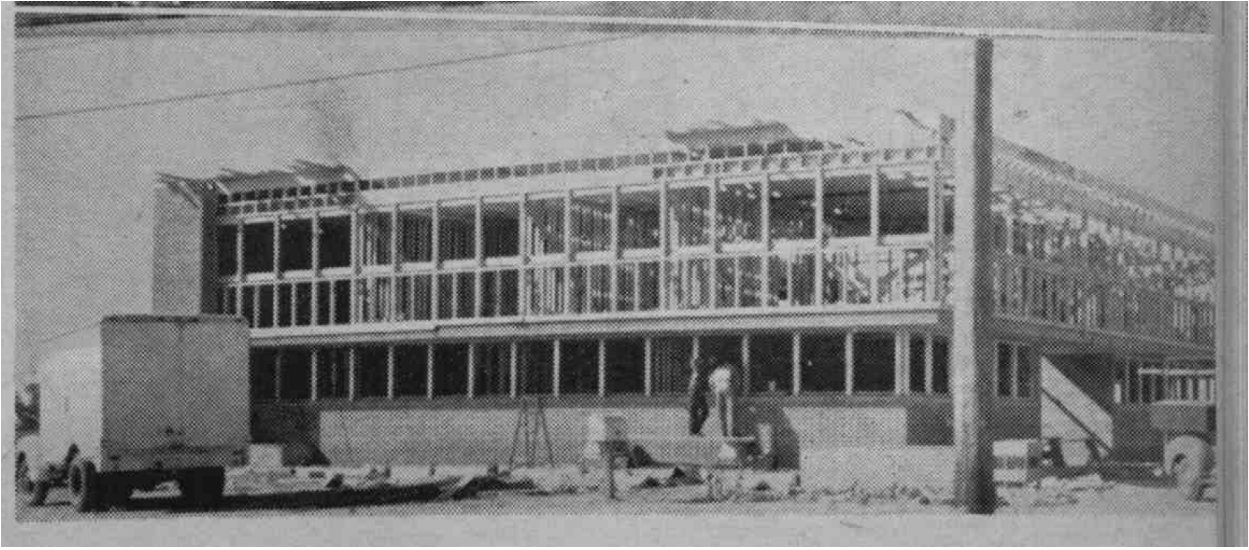


Photo from *Arizona Builder & Contractor* showing building under construction, October 1953



Building Completed The New Produce Center building, McDowell and 21st Ave., now is complete and practically filled with firms' associated in the vegetable growing and shipping business of Salt River Valley. It was erected by Ralph Eaton and features an interior landscaped patio, with balconies serving as halls to second-floor offices. Workmen on scaffold are installing aluminum sun louvers on upper windows. The overhang of the second floor shades the lower windows. Lester H. Laraway was architect.—(Republic Photo, Rod Moyer)

Photo from *Arizona Republic* showing completed building, January 1954

Z-31-20-7
2202 West McDowell Road
Produce Center Building



Aerial photo depicting Produce Center Building at far right, 1957



View of building with second story windows uncovered, looking northwest from intersection of 22nd Avenue and McDowell Road, February 2020

Building Built For Vegetable Shipping Industry By Eaton

A new two-story office building is under construction for Ralph Eaton, prominent vegetable-grower and shipper, at 22nd Avenue and McDowell, that will house several of the industry's offices now downtown.

The building, designed by Lester Laraway, architect, will have a reinforced concrete frame and floors with walls of red Roman brick. It will enclose a patio. Stairs to balcony hallways for the second-floor offices will be in the patio with main entrance on McDowell.

The building will have some interesting architectural features, such as the second floor projecting on the east and south to give shade to the floor below and the use of horizontal steel louvers to control direct sunlight through windows.

Most of the office space, which is to be available Oct. 1, already has been leased, Eaton said yesterday. Among the building's tenants on the first floor will be the Stanley Fruit Co., the Federal Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Service; the Federal-State Market News Service and the office of J. M. Foote, state supervisor of fruit and vegetable standardization service.

All of these offices originally were in the Security Building 20 years ago. The move is one that began several years ago, when the shipping firms began leaving their downtown offices and establishing suitable quarters at their shipping sheds.

Several of the valley's largest packing sheds are adjacent to the new Eaton building.

New Produce Building Now Completed

After delays caused by bricklayers' and painters' strikes, the new Produce Building of Ralph Eaton at 2202 E. McDowell, was completed last week.

Some of its tenants had been in the building since Nov. 1, date it originally was scheduled to be finished. The building now is headquarters of the vegetable and melon growing and shipping industry.

It houses offices of the Federal-State Market News Service, Arizona Fruit and Vegetable Standardization Service, Stanley Fruit Co., Federal Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Service, WESCO Foods Co., Atlantic Commission Co., Bemis Brothers Bag Co., and Pacific Fruit Express.

Eaton also has the office of his construction company in the building and said there are two vacancies which soon will be filled.

The structure, designed by Lester Laraway, architect, has two floors built about a landscaped patio. Balconies on the inside serve as hallways for second-floor offices, which are reached by open stairways.