

Staff Summary Report

Historic Preservation Commission Date: 01/12/12

SUBJECT: Hold a public hearing for Historic Designation of TEMPE DOUBLE BUTTE CEMETERY

DOCUMENT NAME: SSR-HPC-Public Hearing Double Butte.doc

COMMENTS: Request for TEMPE DOUBLE BUTTE CEMETERY, located at 2505 W. Broadway Rd.

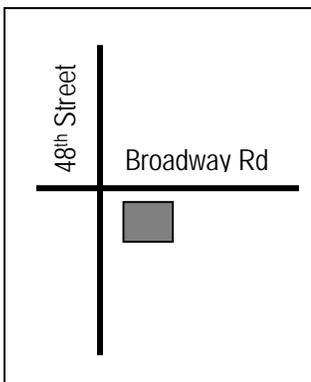
RECOMMENDATION: HPO Staff - Approval

PROCESS: On September 30, 2011, Mayor Hugh Hallman directed HPO to nominate the city-owned Tempe Double Butte Cemetery for historic designation and listing on the Tempe Historic Property register, in recognition of the historical, cultural, and community significance of the property. HPO initiated research for a preliminary determination of eligibility, which was reviewed and approved by the Tempe Double Butte Cemetery Advisory Commission on November 16, 2011. The following actions have been scheduled.

- Neighborhood Meeting @ Tempe HPC 12/08/2011
- 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 cemetery representatives 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 to make a recommendation regarding the proposed designation and listing.

BACKGROUND: Begun as early as 1888, Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is significant primarily as the cemetery most closely associated with Tempe's historical past. Countless local pioneers, from the 1880s through the modern era, are buried here, many of whom played critical roles in shaping Tempe's development and directing the city's social and community evolution. Gravestones of persons of Anglo-American, Hispanic/Mexican-American, African American, and Asian-American descent are among many ethnic groups found here. No other location in Tempe depicts this tradition of cultural diversity more powerfully than Double Butte Cemetery.



SIGNIFICANCE –

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is significant at both the local and state levels, although its importance to Tempe history arguably exceeds its contribution to larger statewide contexts inasmuch as the 11,328 persons buried at the cemetery are more closely associated with Tempe as a community than with Arizona as a state. As Tempe's earliest cemetery, dating to 1888, Double Butte prominently portrays unique diversity through its wide range of burials. Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is also significant as the only cemetery in the Salt River Valley that includes both a Victorian-era pioneer graveyard alongside a Post WWII-era tree-lawn cemetery.

AGE –

The cemetery was officially established on September 13, 1897. It should be noted, however, that the earliest gravestones recorded in the cemetery's burial database date to 1888, making that the earliest verifiable date for the cemetery's period of significance which, under the contexts considered herein, concludes in 1958, the year jurisdiction of the cemetery was first transferred from private to public hands.

CONDITION –

Gravestones and burial plots at Tempe Double Butte Cemetery remain, almost invariably, in good condition, although some of the more antiquated gravestones do need immediate conservation. A significant number of graves at the cemetery do not—and never did—have any permanent identifying markers. All burial plots are currently maintained through the meticulous caretaking of the City of Tempe Parks and Recreation Department.

CHANGES OVER TIME –

The cemetery has expanded several times over the years to accommodate local demand for additional burial spaces. In 1938, Association President Garfield A. Goodwin purchased an adjacent twenty-five acres which were gradually filled to capacity. The most recent expansion occurred in 2008, when expansion of the cemetery allowed the City to resume selling burial plots. In spite of these changes, Tempe Double Butte Cemetery retains its full integrity of setting with regard to the historic period of significance. Visiting the site, one immediately gains a sense of the original layout and it is easy to envision the cemetery as it existed in its earliest days. One of the unique and distinguishing physical features of Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is it is the only cemetery in the Salt River Valley that includes both a Victorian-era pioneer graveyard and a Post WWII-era tree-lawn cemetery. Visitors can readily deduce the manner in which the cemetery strategically expanded at various intervals over a period of many decades, flaring out in different directions to accommodate the need for additional burial plots. Two buttes rise prominently to the southeast, providing a focal point for visual orientation that has remained constant since the first burials occurred. The sheer size and dominance of this unique geography serves to underscore the naturalistic setting and deepen the spiritual connection between humanity and this universal context.

INTEGRITY –

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be designated historic a property must first have historic significance, and it must also maintain sufficient integrity to communicate that significance to persons unfamiliar with the property or with the community in general. Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is significant as a property type under NPS Criterion based on its association with the community's cultural and social developmental history (A), interments of prominent persons in community and state history (B), and its portrayal of architectural significance vis-à-vis the presence of Victorian-era gravestones that are indicative of artistic excellence (C). For the purposes of this nomination, those aspects most pertinent to this determination include: Location; Design; Setting; Materials; Feeling; and Association. Tempe Double Butte Cemetery 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 – This property exists in its originally developed location. The original plots occurred in an undeveloped, Sonoran desert environment at the base of Double Butte. The original burial plots remain within the confines of the current extent of Tempe Double Butte Cemetery, which has grown many times over the years. This outward growth has served only to enhance the integrity of setting and has had no detrimental impact on the historic sections of the cemetery. Integrity of location exists in excess of minimum requirements and as necessary to qualify for designation and listing.

Design – Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is unique in that it is the only cemetery in the Salt River Valley that includes both a Victorian-era pioneer graveyard alongside a Post WWII-era cemetery. The juxtaposition of both sections demonstrates the developmental evolution of the town graveyard into the modern community cemetery. From the gravel interpretation of natural desert in the pioneer section to the tree-lined irrigated lawn areas, both sections coexist with good integrity and together they help us interpret Tempe's growth and development from a rural 19th century farming community to a modern 20th century urban center.

Materials – Because of the continuous use of cemeteries over a period of many years, there is often a wide range of features that are indicative of changes in material aesthetics. Grave markers, for example, often occurred in their earliest forms as nothing more than a small wooden cross which, in many cases, has been replaced in more recent times. The juxtaposition of century-old weathered gravestones next to modern, manufactured-marble markers represents one of the unique design elements of any historic (and still functioning) cemetery, including Tempe Double Butte. Despite the immediate need for conservation of some of the older gravestones, overall integrity of materials exists in excess of minimum requirements and as necessary to qualify for designation and listing.

Feeling – Traditionally, cemeteries evoke a unique sense of feeling, one that we associate with a variety of spiritual and psychological human phenomenon. The presence of rows upon rows of gravestones almost invariably evokes a profound sense of deep reflection and, therefore, cemeteries can be counted among our most sacred places. Cemeteries like Tempe Double Butte serve to bridge the gap between cultural and ethnic divides and provide us with a deeper sense of the complexities and intricacies of human interaction over time.

Association – Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and an historic property. As Tempe's earliest cemetery, Tempe Double Butte prominently portrays the unique diversity of the community across time. Members of various ethnic groups can be found buried alongside one another, a lasting vestige to the remarkable range of associations that constituted daily life in Tempe through the ages. Today, no other place in Tempe so vividly portrays this cultural diversity and functional associations in such a powerful and original setting.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES –

Character-defining features are the qualities of a property conveyed by its materials, features, spaces and finishes. They are the means through which historic character of the property is expressed. Thus, to define the character of a property 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 a property's setting, form and fabric.¹

Topography – Overall area topography exhibits little, if any change and is a contributing feature with good integrity. The magnificence of the adjacent Double Butte, (1500') dominates the landscape and creates an extraordinary geologic setting. In a similar manner, overall spatial organization of the cemetery area remains similar to the historic period and is a contributing feature in good condition. Although vehicular routes within the area have been paved since historic period, historic alignments remain intact and similarly constitute contributing features with good integrity.

Views and Vistas – No longer at the edge of town, the extraordinary natural setting provided by Double Butte supports a sense of timelessness while the geological connection helps support use of the cemetery for contemplation and spiritual purposes. The Butte provides a disconnect from the urban setting and supports a sense of infinite time and space represented by nature. For the most part, views and vistas continue to be centripetally orientated and provide contributing features with good integrity

Designed Vegetation – Some tree loss over time indicates some replanting is needed; however, the overall high degree of maintenance leaves the designed vegetation as a contributing feature with good integrity.

Buildings – Most extant buildings were built after the period of significance and are not contributing features.

Structures – Most extant structures were built after the period of significance and are not contributing features

Objects – Gravestones and burial plots at Tempe Double Butte Cemetery remain, almost invariably, in good condition, although some of the more antiquated gravestones do need immediate conservation.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CEMETERIES AND GRAVES –

Graves, cemeteries, and burial places reflect cultural values and practices of the past and help instruct us about who we are as a people. Often, however, descendants of the interred view graves and cemeteries with a sense of reverence and devout sentiment that can overshadow objective evaluation. For this reason cemeteries and graves are among those properties that ordinarily are not considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places unless they meet special requirements. The National Register Criteria for Evaluation include special considerations by which burial places may be determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Called Criteria Considerations, they stipulate how burial places that meet basic eligibility criteria may be listed utilizing special provisions.

Tempe HPO research prepared for the HPC Neighborhood Meeting on December 08, 2011, used National Park Service Criteria Considerations C and D to arrive at a preliminary determination of eligibility under multiple criteria for historic designation and listing Tempe Double Butte Cemetery in the Tempe Historic Property Register.²

NPS CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION		NPS CRITERIA CONSIDERATION
A (association with events)	is modified by	D (age or historic events)
B (association with people)	is modified by	C (no other property exists)
C (construction or design)	is modified by	D (artistic or unique attributes)

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 Double Butte Cemetery in the Tempe Historic Property Register.³

Development of Double Butte Cemetery, Tempe AZ, 1888 to 1958

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery traces its roots back as far as 1888, the date of the first recorded graves in the cemetery register (six total graves are known to date from that year). For the next decade, Double Butte grew to become Tempe's primary burial place. Among the first sections to be professionally developed by the Tempe Cemetery Company, what has come to be known as the "Pioneer Section" offered family plats and was located adjacent to earlier, pre-1897 burials. In 1938 Tempe Cemetery Association President Garfield A. Goodwin asked the board of directors to approve a motion for the purchase of 25 acres of land abutting the western fringe of the existing grounds. In upcoming years burial plots would continue to fill these newly acquired lands which were generally full by 1958. By the 1950s, the cemetery had grown to a size and scale that severely taxed the administrative abilities of a volunteer organization like the Tempe Cemetery Association.

At a board of directors meeting on April 17, 1958, members announced that a deal had been struck to "convey to the City of Tempe all of its right, title, and interest in and to the property . . . on the condition that the city assume its obligations to operate same as a cemetery." Thus, after sixty years of private, volunteer-organization management, Tempe Double Butte Cemetery reverted to administration by the City of Tempe. It remains under city ownership and administration to this day

Cultural, Social, and Historical Development in Tempe AZ, 1888 to 1958

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery provides understanding and appreciation of Tempe's highly diversified past with unparalleled transparency. As the primary place of burial for community residents beginning in the late 1880s and extending into the modern era, the cemetery reflects, through its array of burial plots and headstones, the cultural and social diversity of Tempe over a period spanning generations and dating back into the community's earliest years. What role does Tempe Double Butte Cemetery play in all of this? Patterns of community developmental related to farming, transportation, and education encouraged an ever-increasing array of culturally and socially diverse inhabitants in Tempe. These seemingly disparate developmental phenomena are drawn together in a powerful and spiritual manner at Double Butte Cemetery. Persons of all ethnic backgrounds—regardless of previous neighborhood segregation in the local community or racial backlash that occurred between different ethnic groups—are here found in one and the same place, a lasting testament to the fact that all were,

during their lifetimes, a pivotal component of the Tempe community in the their own way and undeniably assisted, through their daily activities, in creating the Tempe that exists today. As such, Double Butte Cemetery holds a unique distinction as the location that perhaps best exhibits the cultural and social evolution of the Tempe community.

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 Double Butte Cemetery. Tempe Municipal Building, located at 2505 West Broadway Road retains its identity the historic cemetery of the community and continues to be recognized as the loci of a variety of spiritual and psychological human phenomenon. T

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is significant as the city's oldest and most prominent cemetery. It exudes a sense of place and character that is unique to Tempe and portrays the local community as culturally, ethnically, and socially diverse.

REASONS FOR APPROVAL –

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery 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 DOUBLE BUTTE CEMETERY 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:

1888	First burials occur at the future site of Tempe Double Butte Cemetery ⁴
September 13, 1897	Tempe Cemetery Company is formed to administer lands donated by local pioneer Niels Petersen.
September 1922	Original articles of incorporation (lasting 25 years) for Tempe Cemetery Company expire; new board of directors is elected and the articles are extended. Directors include Hugh Laird, Mrs. B.B. Moeur, and Joseph T. Birchett.
1924	Board of Directors begins fundraising efforts to address pecuniary shortfalls. Within two years, sufficient funds had been raised to regain financial solvency.
1929	Joseph Birchett retires as Cemetery Association President.
1930	W.S. Austin elected president of Cemetery Association.
1938	Association President Garfield A. Goodwin initiates efforts to expand the cemetery onto adjacent lands; twenty-five acres are purchased and, in upcoming years, these are gradually filled to capacity.
April 17, 1958	The three remaining board members announced that a deal had been made with the City of Tempe to transfer jurisdiction of the cemetery from private to public hands.
1963	The Phoenix Bricklaying and Stone Masonry Joint Apprenticeship Committee selects Double Butte Cemetery for the yearly project, which involves the construction of peripheral fencing around the cemetery.
1965	City of Tempe sells lands east of the cemetery to Maricopa County for construction and expansion of Interstate-10.
1984	In consideration of diminishing space, Double Butte begins reviewing plans for what would eventually become the Memorial Gardens.
1994	Double Butte Cemetery sells its last remaining burial plots; proposals for transferring the property to a private entity are considered.
April 23, 1998	City Council approves private company's bid to purchase Double Butte Cemetery.
2000	Cemetery reverts back to City of Tempe oversight and ownership.
2008	Expansion of the cemetery allows the City to begin selling additional burial plots.
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 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

² City of Tempe Historic Preservation Office Tempe Historic Preservation Office Research Report TEMPE DOUBLE BUTTE CEMETERY Tempe Historic Property Register Designation #47 Preliminary Determination of Eligibility 6-402 Neighborhood Meeting 12/08/11 <http://www.tempe.gov/historicpres/Designations/DoubleButteCemetery/TDBC-PDE-HPCNM.pdf>

³ Ibid

⁴ Fox, Cheryl L. "A History of Tempe's Double Butte Cemetery" <http://www.tempe.gov/cemetery/pdf/CEMhistory.pdf>;