

SOUTH MOUNTAIN PARK, ENTRY COMPLEX
10919 South Central Avenue
Phoenix
Maricopa County
Arizona

HALS AZ-16
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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HALS NO. AZ-16

Location: 10919 South Central Avenue, Phoenix, Maricopa County, Arizona.

South Mountain Park Entry Complex is located within the 16,000 acres of South Mountain Park in Phoenix, Arizona approximately seven miles south of downtown Phoenix.

Latitude: 33.348192 Longitude: -112.083476 (Administration Building, Google Earth, Simple Cylindrical Projection, WGS84)

Significance: During the 1930s, the Department of Interior's National Park Service prepared the first comprehensive master plan for South Mountain Park, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was responsible for all of the construction there from 1934 to 1937. The National Park Service (NPS) designed the roads and structures in the park, and the CCC built them. The South Mountain Park Entry Complex was the first phase of work completed at the park by the CCC under the New Deal legislation.

As the first work to focus on natural materials and recognizing the importance of the local environment, the CCC Entry Complex is a worthy example of erasing the line between manmade structure and natural forms. "NPS architects used the regional themes and motifs from the native peoples and pioneers of Arizona."¹ Many Hopi and other Southwest Native American pueblo buildings and adobe structures were stylistic inspirations for materials and designs. The materials used were all found locally, such as schist and granite stone (Figure 1). The original Entry Complex buildings were built under architect Herbert Maier's direction. "These stone buildings illustrate most of the philosophies that were guiding the CCC and the NPS during the New Deal era."² The only other Park Service pueblo style building in Arizona is at the Grand Canyon National Park.

Maier was highly influenced by "Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter, the architect and interior designer for the Fred Harvey Company at Grand Canyon."³ "Her work was a synthesis of West Coast and Midwestern influences and her study of the indigenous architecture of the Southwest. She was particularly inspired by the pueblo constructions, cliff dwellings, and temples found in the Mesa Verde ruins and living Hopi communities such as Oraibi, Arizona."⁴ Maier "had special

¹ "New Deal Architecture in South Mountain Park", pg. 4

² "New Deal Architecture in South Mountain Park", pg. 6

³ McClelland, pg. 62

⁴ McClelland, pg. 62

interest in Colter's ability to site buildings on the edge of natural canyons and to harmoniously blend masonry of native stone with the natural rock formations. A respect for Colter's work is suggested by his design for the administration building at South Mountain Park”⁵ Entry Complex. It is this style that relates South Mountain Park with the Grand Canyon National Park.

Description: Central Avenue directly connects South Mountain Park to downtown Phoenix. The main road leads into the Entry Complex and then ends at Dobbins Lookout. Figure 2 shows the current boundaries of South Mountain Park. Figure 3.1 shows the location of the Entry Complex as well as other major CCC structure locations including the maintenance yard.

“Soon after you enter the park, you will see a cluster of stone and adobe structures to the right of the modern gatehouse in the middle of the road. This group of buildings was constructed by the CCC between 1934 and 1937. They served as the original gateway for visitors to the Park. Although the buildings are connected, they each served a different function.”⁶

By creating a more environmentally responsive design, the Entry Complex is itself an interpretive exhibit for the desert landscape. Figure 3.3 shows the overall layout of the complex. It now functions as a gateway that welcomes guests visiting for outdoor recreational and educational purposes. In the past, the Entry Complex area functioned almost like a town’s main street where many social activities took place.

The building on the far left is the Concessionaire’s House, located adjacent to the administration complex (Figure 4). It was built of adobe like the “Papago-Pima” adobe in suite with the NPS and CCC style. In front of the building is a one car carport. This building is 25’5”x23’ and has its own back patio.

The Museum/Administration building is a pueblo style example (Figure 5 and Figure 6). Standing to the right of the Concessionaire’s House, it contains a museum space that is currently used as office space, one bathroom, and four office spaces. The museum space is 22’6”x10’4” and is being prepped to become a museum space once again. The first office to the left of entering the building is 11’11”x10’5”. There is a constant flood problem in this office area and the back patio area due to poor drainage. The patio area, 22’8”x12’, contains four picnic tables and a 3’4”x3’ outside fireplace (Figure 7). The courtyard in the front of the building has been planted with natural vegetation and includes a beautiful Palo Verde tree that provides substantial shade for the bench and pathway underneath it (Figure 8 and Figure 9).

⁵ McClelland, pg. 64

⁶ “New Deal Architecture in South Mountain Park”, pg. 5

In 1936 the restroom building was added. The 16'11"x5'9" addition is used by many of the recreational users of the site as a rest stop to refill water and take a break in the shade from the harsh weather (Figure 10).

The far right building was originally constructed for the South Mountain Park Caretaker. "While the Caretaker's Quarters now contains park administrative offices, the building still maintains its rustic appeal"⁷ (Figure 12 and Figure 13). There are current plans to make this 32'10"x30'8" building more accessible.

The location of the buildings is at the foot of a very steep hill. Upon this hill stands the original source of water, the Water Tower which stands with a 15'5" diameter. It is located at an approximate elevation of 470' (Figure 14 and Figure 15).

South of the main roadway is the Entry Complex maintenance yard. There are horse stables located in this fenced off area (Figure 16). They were built around 1994 by the rangers to give ease of access to their horses. Unfortunately, due to lack of funds, they are no longer in use. Only a few years after the stables were built, newer buildings were built for storage to replace the older wooden sheds that were there originally (Figure 17 and Figure 18). Southwest of the maintenance yard stands a house that was used for personal quarters for previous rangers (Figure 19 and Figure 20). All the buildings were designed to follow the original CCC style using adobe and brick materials. The maintenance yard is accessed from the main roadway.

At the first public stop along Central Avenue is the "original flag post monument of the South Mountain Park CCC Camp. These features are the only remnants of the CCC camp."⁸ The star is the base of the flag post (Figure 20 and Figure 21). It is the center of three large rings of cemented stones. The largest circular ring is 20' in diameter. The second ring is 11' in diameter and the smallest ring is 3.5' in diameter. The star has a length of 5.5' for each point measured from the center point of all three rings, which is 14' from the main roadway pavement edge. The structure of the embedded pieces range from rock size of 10.5" to pebble size of 1" (Figure 22 and Figure 23).

Only 41.25' away stand the columns of another original CCC structure (Figure 24). The posts, 2'x2', stand 6.6' apart from one another and 13.5' away from the street edge. They still have the original wooden supports between them. In the center of the columns facing the roadway, stands the CCC original water fountain.

The ramada shown in the picture is not a CCC original structure, and is 270'

⁷ "New Deal Architecture in South Mountain Park", pg. 5

⁸ "New Deal Architecture in South Mountain Park", pg. 7

away from the center of the star and its rings (Figure 25). In between the CCC columns and the ramada stand two smaller CCC posts (Figure 26). The left one closer to the columns measures 21"x21" and the other post closer to the ramada measures 20"x20". It has a 13.25' offset from the main roadway pavement edge and 20.8' distance from the closest column.

One of the major qualities of the site is the preservation of the natural vegetation and the efforts to re-vegetate areas that were damaged in the past due to heavy use (Figure 27 and Figure 28). The park as a whole preserves numerous desert inhabitants, many of which exist at the Entry Complex. The desert inhabitants have been the basis of park education and interpretive programs.

History:

In the late 1800's Arizona was a mining and farming territory. South of the Salt River lived the only residents at that time, Mexican grain farmers. "May 1873, Prescott merchant Michael Wormser made arrangements to supply the Mexican farmers, and required them to obtain legal title to their land. When they ended up falling into debt, he took possession of their land, acquiring 9,000 acres of land in South Phoenix and Tempe. After Wormser's death on April 25, 1898, most of his real estate holdings were purchased on January 9, 1901 by land and cattle magnate Dwight B. Heard, who also ran The Arizona Republican (now The Arizona Republic) newspaper from 1912 until his death in 1929. This land, which includes most of the northeast part of South Phoenix, became the Bartlett-Heard Ranch, which began being subdivided and sold for home sites on March 20, 1910."⁹ Although the Bartlett-Heard Ranch was not in the same location, for the development of the Ranch prompted Mr. Heard's later actions involving South Mountain.

In February of 1900 there were many miners that traveled to the South Mountain area. It was this new trend that brought George and Norah McClarty to file the "earliest known claim within South Mountain, the Richmond, along the northern face of the range."¹⁰ Only nine years later the Max Delta Claims "produced over \$30,000 in gold and thousands more in other precious metals."¹¹

"During 1912-1913, the Highline and Western canals were built to supply water from the Salt River to the South Mountain area, which led to further agricultural development. In addition to raising cattle, the land was used for raising alfalfa, cotton, oranges and other citrus trees, canaigre (a plant that produces tannin used for tanning leather), and even Louis Janssens' Belgian-American Ostrich Farm, which operated on 230 acres of Bartlett-Heard subdivided land until World War

⁹ Ryden, pg. 16, 18, 23-24, 52-53

¹⁰ www.examiner.com, May 2014

¹¹ www.examiner.com, May 2014

I.”¹²

It wasn't until 1920 that South Mountain became more than just a mountain owned by the federal government. Two avid hikers, one being Mr. Dwight B. Heard and the other Mr. H.C. Hartranft, concluded that the land they loved so much must be protected. It was “through the foresight of these early Phoenix civic leaders that South Mountain was preserved for our enjoyment today.”¹³ As they watched private owners encroach upon South Mountain by buying surrounding tracts of land, they banded together with Mr. Steven Mathers, the City of Phoenix Planning Board, and other concerned citizens to propose in 1921 that South Mountain be bought and set aside as a city park.

As a result of their efforts, in June of 1924 “President Coolidge sold some 13,000 acres of mountain-scape to Phoenix for a total of \$17,000.”¹⁴ At this time the city's population was at 150,000. “Establishing a desert mountain park just 7 and $\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the heart of Phoenix in 1924 was a dramatic achievement.”¹⁵ After the land was successfully saved and placed aside for residents use, it became a perfect candidate for CCC work, because “the main task of the CCC was the improvement of the nation's natural environment for the purposes of conservation and public recreation.”¹⁶

The 1930s were a significant time for South Mountain Park. The Department of Interior's National Park Service wrote the first comprehensive master plan during this time. In March 1933, Congress approved funding for the New Deal to bring the “3 R's” to the United States: Relief, Recovery, and Reform. “The New Deal was a series of domestic programs”¹⁷ to help the country recover from the economic depression, and to reform the economic system to prevent similar circumstances in the future. One of these programs, initiated by Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace, was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). It was signed into law April 5, 1933, notably within the first 100 days of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Administration. The South Mountain Park Entry Complex is significant as only the beginning of the CCC work at South Mountain Park.

A little over ten years later, in 1936, there was visitation of around 3,000 people during the summer and that number swelled by thousands during the winter. Although the New Deal ended in 1936, the CCC continued working on nationwide projects until 1942. From 1933 to 1940, 4,000 CCC men participated

¹² Ryden, pg. 33, 38-39

¹³ “New Deal Architecture in South Mountain Park”, pg. 1

¹⁴ “South Mountain Park Master Plan”, pg. 54

¹⁵ “South Mountain Park Master Plan”, pg. 54

¹⁶ “New Deal Architecture in South Mountain Park”, pg. 1-2

¹⁷ www.loc.gov, May 2014

in the South Mountain project. “They completed 26 miles of roads, 40 miles of hiking and bridle trails, 18 buildings, 15 picnic ramadas and a host of other improvements”¹⁸ including the Entry Complex. In 1940 the city revisited the thought of creating a master plan for the site to enhance its recreational and educational value (Figure 29). The year 1942 brought the Second World War and the permanent end of the CCC program.

Today, anyone can visit South Mountain Park and explore the trails and lookouts that are there, in large part due to the work of the CCC, the NPS, and to the support of the City of Phoenix. In addition to the educational opportunities, South Mountain Park Entry Complex provides the community an opening into a vast desert landscape minutes away from the busy urban life of the Phoenix area.

In recent years, the park has been lacking in sufficient budgets for maintenance and programming. Only recently has the City of Phoenix realized the need for rehabilitation and importance of the site to its citizens. The latest Master Plan (Figure 30), from 1989, recommended adding South Mountain Park to the Historic Property Register as a nonresidential historic district and sought to improve the site for visitors’ use.

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¹⁸ “New Deal Architecture in South Mountain Park”, pg. 3

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Figure 1: Example of local materials used. North-facing view of the original door to the museum building taken from the museum courtyard. (Corinna Barber, May 2014).

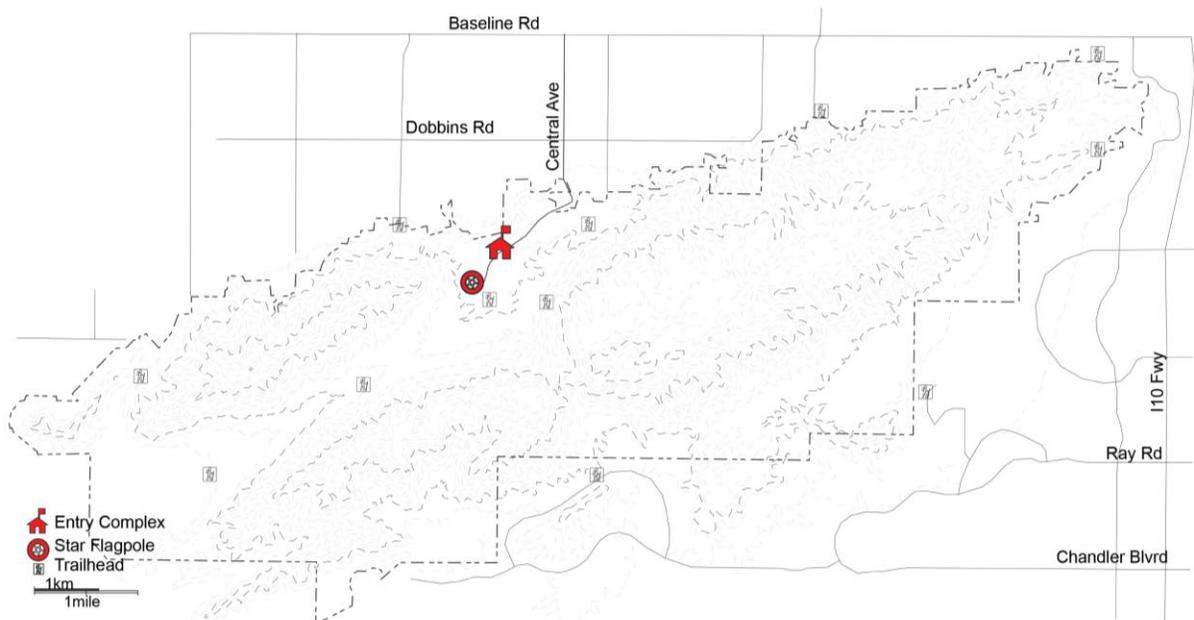


Figure 2: Overall topography of South Mountain Park. (Corinna Barber, May 2014).

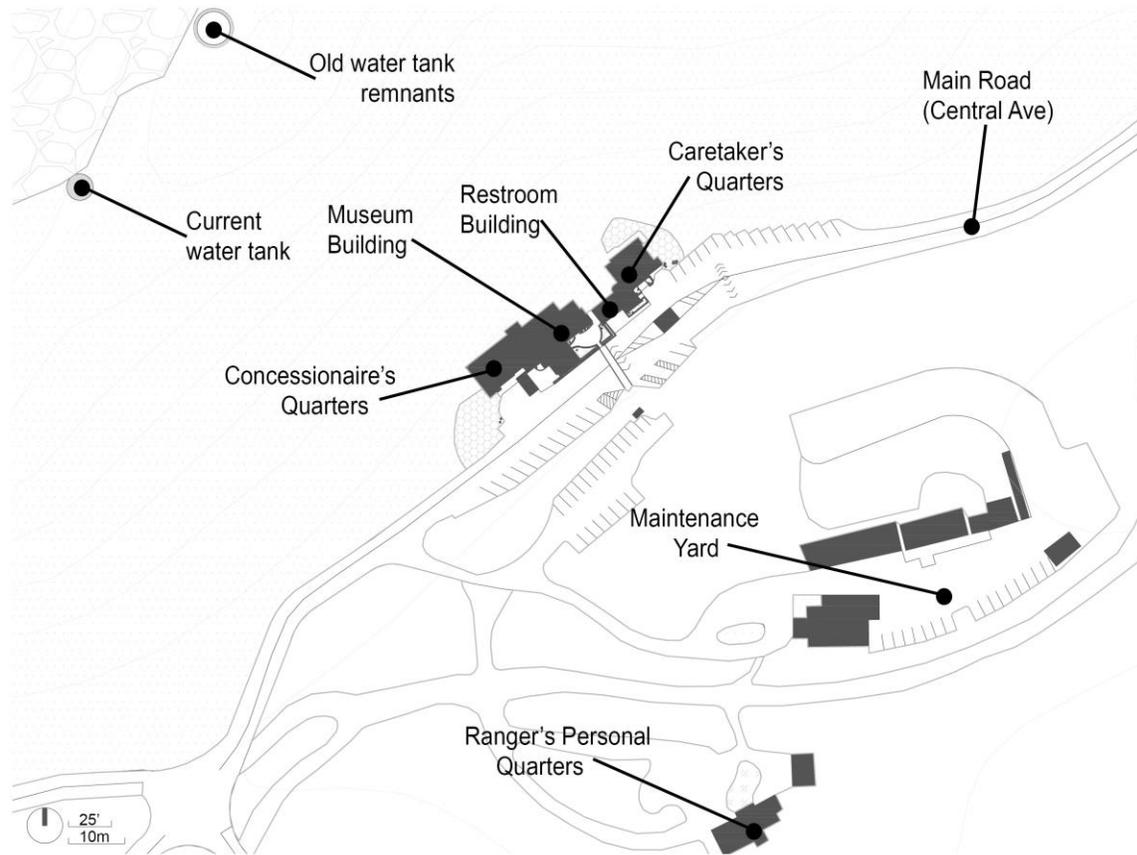


Figure 3.1: Buildings layout of South Mountain Entry Complex as well as the maintenance yard structures. (Corinna Barber, May 2014).

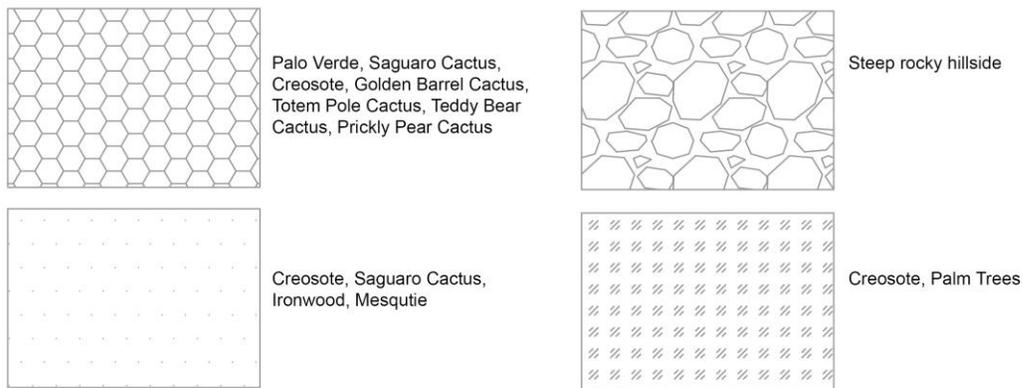


Figure 3.2: Legend of Figure 3.1 Buildings of South Mountain Entry Complex Vegetation (Corinna Barber, May 2014).

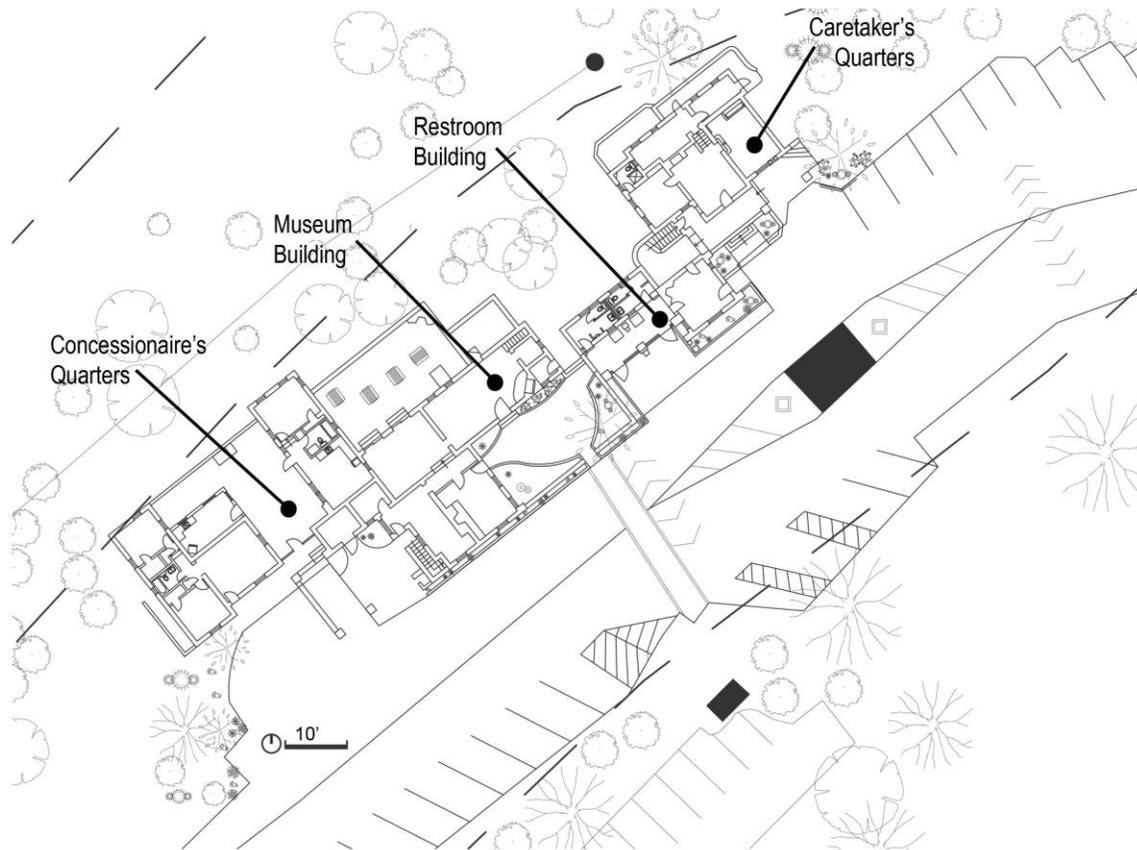


Figure 3.3: South Mountain Entry Complex in detail (floor plan) (Corinna Barber, May 2014).

Vegetation:

- Palo Verde Tree
- Mesquite Tree
- Ironwood Tree

- Creosote Bush

- Totem Pole Cactus
- Saguaro Cactus
- Prickly Pear Cactus
- Teddy Bear Cactus
- Golden Barrel Cactus

Materials:

- Adobe walls
- Stone walls
- Stone fireplace

- Concrete interior flooring
- Flagstone courtyard flooring
- Asphalt roadway

- Wooden doors
- Wooden window frames
- Wooden bench
- Wooden picnic table

Figure 3.4: Vegetation and Materials List of Figure 3.3 South Mountain Entry Complex (floor plan) (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 4: The front view of the Concessionaire's House with the carport to the right (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 5: The front view of the Museum/Administrative with the Concessionaire's House to the left (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 6: The front view of the Museum/Administrative building with restrooms to the right (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 7: The back patio of the Museum/Administrative building. Standing just north of the doorway looking north east (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 8: The east side of the courtyard in front of the Museum/Administrative building (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 9: The west side of the courtyard in front of the Museum/Administrative building (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 10: The front (south elevation) of the restroom building (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 11: The front (south elevation) of the Caretaker's Quarters (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 12: The entrance of the Caretaker's Quarters (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 13: The original water tower located above the buildings. Looking north from Central Avenue just east of Concessionaire's Quarters (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 14: The original water tower, looking east from the Big Ten Ramada parking lot (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 15: Stables located within maintenance yard. (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 16: Main office area in the maintenance yard (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 17: South elevation of newer storage building in the maintenance yard (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 18: (West Elevation) Stable for the personal quarters south of the maintenance yard (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 19: (North elevation) Personal quarters south of the maintenance yard (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 20: The CCC original star flagpole base with the ramada in the background looking east (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 21: The CCC original star flagpole base looking southwest (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 22: The CCC original star flagpole base showing the different pebble and rock sizes (Corinna Barber, May 2014).

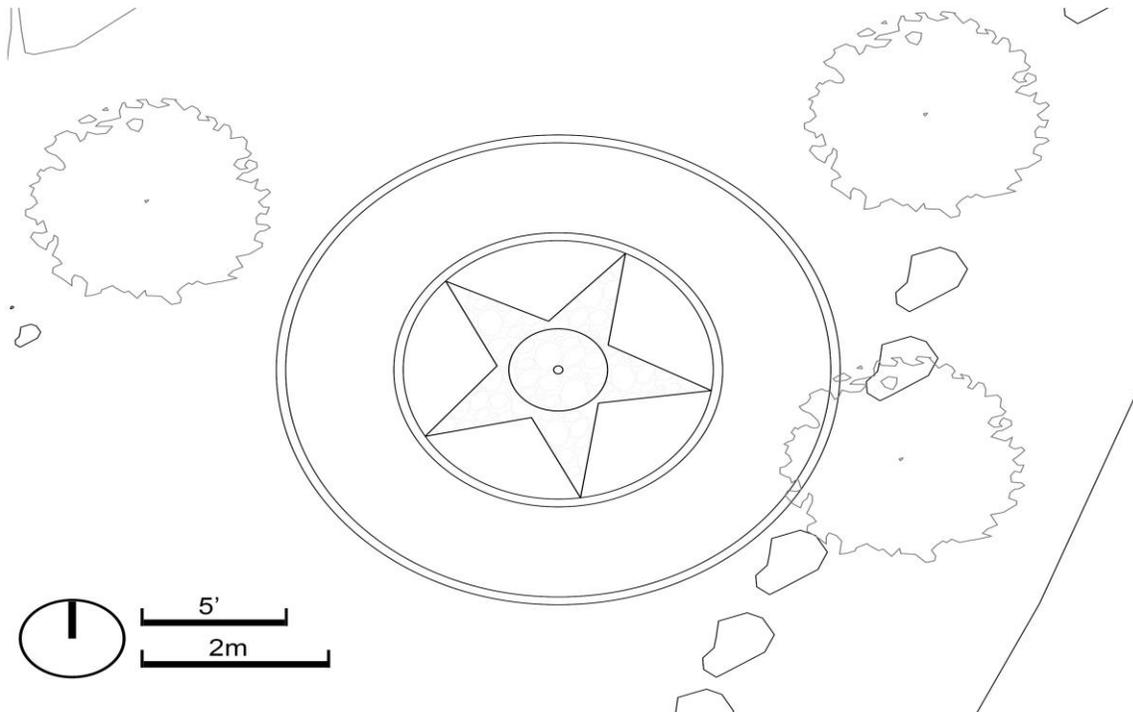


Figure 23: The CCC original star flagpole base with scale (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 24: (South Elevation) The CCC original structure columns and water fountain (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 25: (South Elevation) The ramada just east of the CCC star base, columns, water fountain, and posts (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 26: South elevation of the smaller CCC posts between the star and ramada. (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 27: East-facing view of the vegetation along the dirt road just south of the maintenance yard (Corinna Barber, May 2014).



Figure 28: East-facing view of the vegetation around the Max Delta trail adjacent to the Restroom Building in the Entry Complex (Corinna Barber, May 2014).

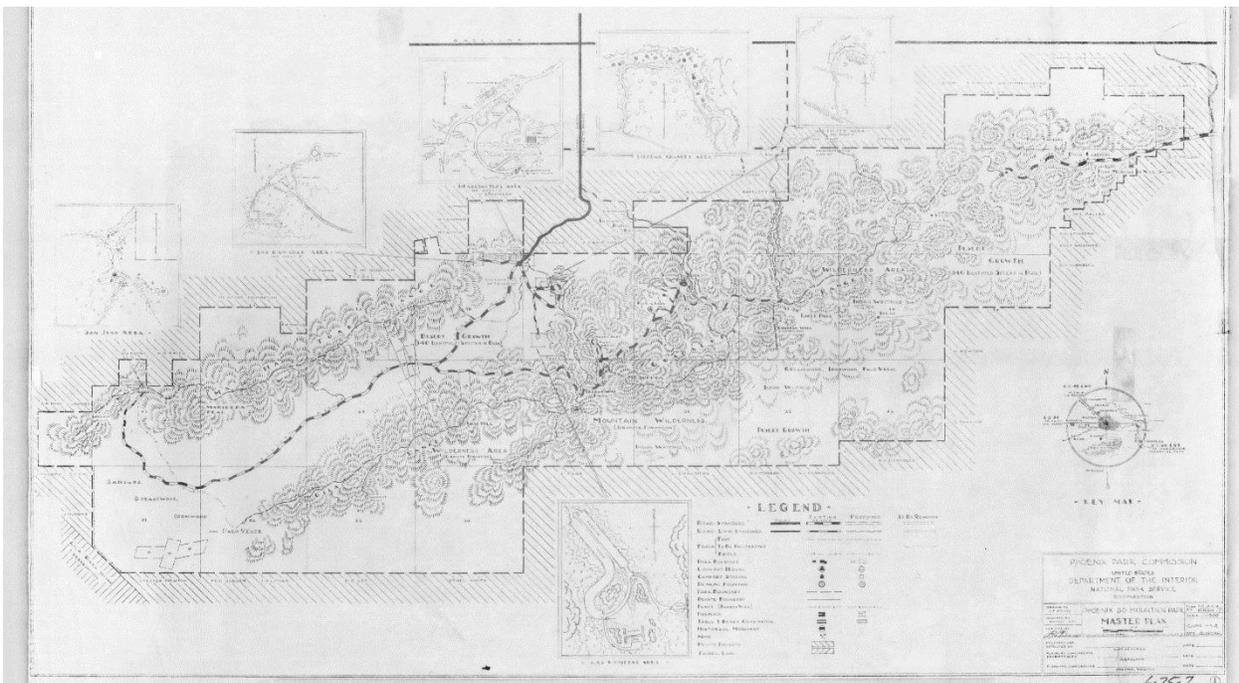


Figure 29: 1940 Master Plan (City of Phoenix Public Record).

SOUTH MOUNTAIN PARK, ENTRY COMPLEX

HALS NO. AZ-16

PAGE 26

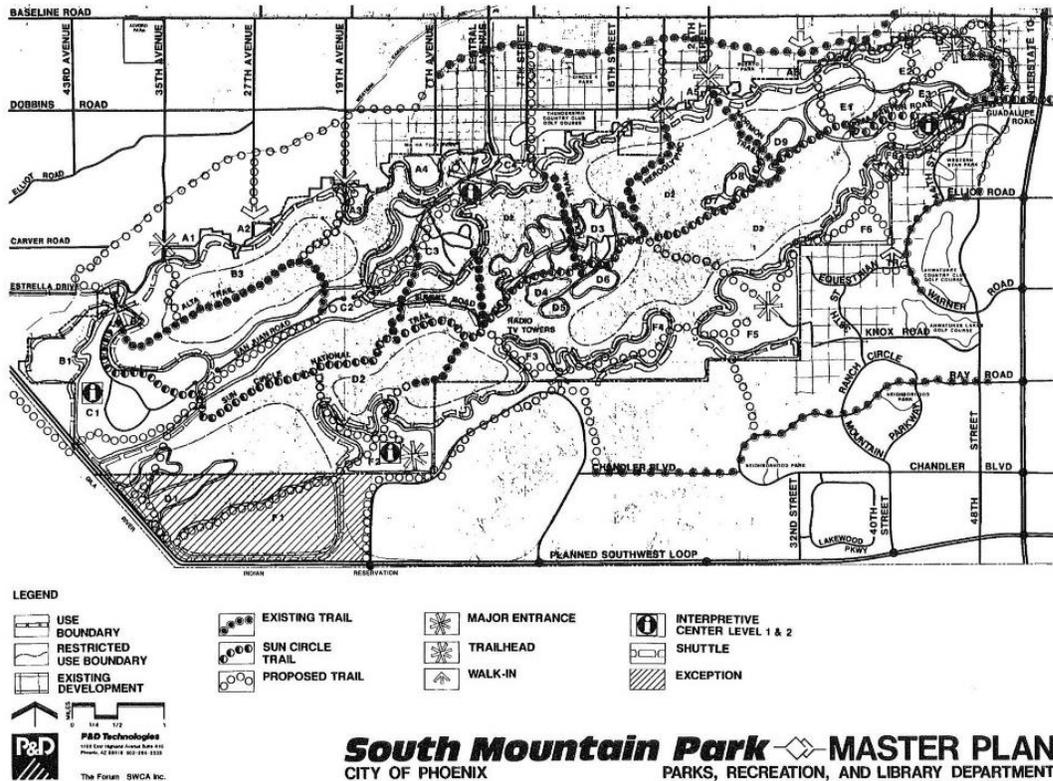


Figure 30: 1989 Master Plan (City of Phoenix Public Record).