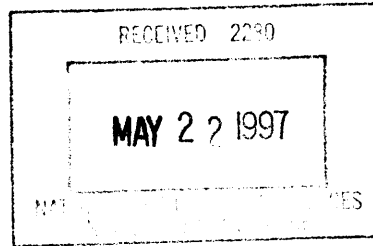


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name U.S.D.A. Tucson Plant Materials Center (PMC)

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 3241 North Romero Road \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city or town Tucson \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity

state Arizona code AZ county Pima code 019 zip code 85705

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Gary J. Navarre NRCS State Archaeologist 1/14/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arizona State Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James W. [Signature] ASBAP 3/19/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS  
State or Federal agency and bureau

U.S.D.A. Tucson PMC

Pima, AZ

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

X entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.

[Handwritten Signature]

7/2/97

- See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. removed from the National Register.

other, (explain):

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include listed resources within the count)

Table with 4 columns: Ownership, Category, Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows include private, public-local, public-state, public-federal, building(s), district, site, structure, object, and Total counts.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

- GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION/research facility, AGRICULTURE/processing, AGRICULTURE/storage, AGRICULTURE/horticultural facility

- GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION/research facility, AGRICULTURE/processing, AGRICULTURE/storage, AGRICULTURE/horticultural facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- Late 19th and early 20th Century American Movements, Pueblo Revival

- foundation Concrete, walls adobe, roof plywood, other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Attached

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the  
criteria qualifying the property for the  
National Register listing.)

Areas of Significance  
(Enter categories from  
instructions)

X A Property is associated with events  
that have made a significant  
contribution to the broad patterns of  
our history.

Agriculture  
Architecture  
Conservation  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ B Property is associated with the lives  
of persons significant in our past.

Significant Person  
\_\_\_\_\_

X C Property embodies the distinctive  
characteristics of a type, period, or  
method of construction or represents  
the work of a master, or possesses  
high artistic values, or represents a  
significant and distinguishable entity  
whose components lack individual  
distinction.

Period of Significance  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1934-1946  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ D Property has yielded, or is likely to  
yield, information important in  
prehistory or history.

Significant Dates  
\_\_\_\_\_  
1935, 1936  
\_\_\_\_\_

Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply).

\_\_\_ A owned by a religious institution or  
used for religious purposes.

Cultural Affiliation  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ B removed from its original location.

\_\_\_ C a birthplace or grave.

\_\_\_ D a cemetery.

\_\_\_ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

Architect/Builder  
Civilian Conservation Corps  
Architect Unknown

\_\_\_ F a commemorative property.

\_\_\_ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

USDA Tucson PMC

Pima, AZ

Name of Property

County and State

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) Attached

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous Documentation on File (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

National Park Service

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # AZ-159-A through AZ-159-B-8

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 5.0

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 <u>1/2</u>	<u>4/9/9/6/9/0</u>	<u>3/5/6/9/7/6/0</u>	3 <u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2 <u>1/2</u>	<u>4/9/9/6/6/0</u>	<u>3/5/6/9/7/5/0</u>	4 <u>/</u>	<u>/ / / / /</u>	<u>/ / / / / /</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing

\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet) Attached

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet) Attached

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Gary L. Navarre, James A. Briggs

organization USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service date 7/20/96

street & number 3003 N. Central Ave., Suite 800 telephone (602) 280-8799

city or town Phoenix state AZ zip code 85012-2945

USDA Tucson PMC

Pima, AZ

Name of Property

County and State

### **Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets (attached for Items 7, 8, and 10)

Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.(attached)  
A scale map of the site plan and boundaries. (attached).

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property. (already in possession of the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service).

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### **Property Owner**

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Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

street & number 3003 N. Central Ave., Suite 800 telephone (602) 280-8799

city or town Phoenix state Arizona zip code 85012-2945

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

name of property USDA Tucson Plant Materials Center  
county and state Pima, Arizona

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### Summary

The Tucson Plant Materials Center (the Center) is owned and operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) (formerly the Soil Conservation Service). The Center is involved with the study and propagation of plant species for the purpose of releasing beneficial plants to address conservation problems. It has functioned in essentially the same capacity since it began operation in the 1930s. The Center occupies a triangular, 45.88 acre-tract of land located on the northwest side of the City of Tucson, Arizona, in a light industrial and residential area about four miles from downtown. It consists of a headquarters building complex at the south end or apex of the triangle, and extensive agricultural fields opening to the north and northwest. The tract is bounded on the north by Prince Street, on the east by Romero Drive, and on the west by the Southern Pacific Railroad Right-of-way. Access is provided by a 175 foot-long paved driveway extending west into the complex from Romero Road.

The building complex originally consisted of eight buildings completed between 1935 and 1941. These included the Administration Building (1935), the Superintendent's Cottage (1936), the General Utility Building (1936), a Machinery Shed (1936), a Green House and Lath House (1936), a Bunkhouse (ca. 1938), and the Superintendent's Garage (ca. 1938 - 1941). Significant alterations to the complex were made in the mid 1960s when the Bunkhouse was demolished to make way for a new Seed storage and processing building, and the original Green House was razed and replaced with a native specimen plant garden. The USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) also erected a large building north of the Seed Building at this time, and two vehicle or tool shelters were added along with four small greenhouses. The remaining older buildings underwent reroofing, repainting, and various other improvements.

Beginning in 1991, as the result of plans by NRCS to demolish and replace most of the original structures, the complex was reviewed for eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Five of the original buildings, notable for their association with the Center and their stuccoed adobe construction and Pueblo Revival Style architecture, were determined eligible for inclusion. Three of these - the Machinery Shed and the Superintendent's Cottage and Garage, were demolished after recording for inclusion in the Historic American Building Survey. The Administration and General Utility Buildings, which are the most prominent and the first constructed of the original buildings, were identified for rehabilitation and adaptive re-use. These two buildings, together with about five acres of the surrounding landscaped grounds and agricultural fields, form the nominated property. Other buildings and structures, and the additional agricultural fields, have been determined to lack contributing significance.

Rehabilitation of the Administration Building was completed in 1994 and the General Utility Building awaits similar treatment. Both buildings retain their historic appearance and are fine examples of the Pueblo Revival Style as seen in the genuine adobe brick construction, stuccoed exterior walls, rectangular massing of structural form, metal casement windows with multiple panes, flat roofs with parapets, simulated vigas (protruding beams below the parapets), and recessed courts or patio areas. Although the original lawns were replaced in 1994 with a lower maintenance, southwest species landscape, a number of mature trees were saved and the setting retains much of its original rural and agricultural character.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

name of property USDA Tucson Plant Materials Center  
county and state Pima, Arizona

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### The Administration Building

The Administration Building is used for offices and laboratories. It was the first and, at 3600 square feet, the largest of the buildings constructed at the Center. It is a detached, single story, flat roofed-structure with a low parapet and false vigas. It is "U" shaped in plan, measuring 70 feet wide by 75 feet deep, and encloses a small court or patio. The width of each ell is 20 feet. The rear courtyard formed by the two opposing wings is 30 feet wide by 55 feet deep. The court is enclosed on the west or open end by a low adobe wall with a central entrance.

The building is constructed of adobe brick walls, 10 to 12 inches thick, which are built on concrete foundations and fired brick stem walls. The adobe bricks were manufactured on site. The exterior of the adobe walls were originally covered with pebble-dashed Portland cement plaster and were replastered in 1994 to closely approximate the original appearance. The flat wood "floating" roof was also manufactured on site, and is hidden by low parapets. False vigas, approximately three feet on center, are located below all parapets. The original vigas, which were badly deteriorated, were replaced in 1994 with new wood.

The front elevation faces east towards Romero Road, and is symmetrical about a central entrance. The facade is composed of three bays, with the central bay demarcated by a stepped parapet and a low wall surrounding a 24 foot wide entrance courtyard. Each bay contains two evenly located steel casement windows. The windows, which are used throughout the building, are three feet wide by five feet high with two, four light leaves and a two light fixed top light.

The central door was replaced in the 1960s with a flush wood door and the original side lights were infilled with plywood. In 1994 the central door was replaced with a flush steel door and the original side lights were re-installed. A new wood arbor over the central entrance was also added at that time.

The north and south walls also feature steel casement windows. One window, located near the center of the south wall, was converted to a door between 1963 and 1965. This feature was converted back to a window in 1994. An original paired doorway near the west end of the south wall was also infilled in the 1960s, and remains in the same condition.

The west walls of the opposing wings originally contained centrally located doorways. The single leaf door at the west end of the north wing was replaced previously with a flush door, which remains. The original paired flush doors at the west end of the south wing were infilled in 1994. Access to the building from the courtyard is through a central door in the west wall of the main portion of the building. A second entrance to the building from the courtyard was located off center on the south wall of the north wing, but was infilled in 1994. Each of the three courtyard walls also contain steel sash casement windows. With the exception of two small bathroom windows, all the windows are of the same size throughout the building.

A small basement, measuring 12 feet deep by 30 feet wide is located near the center of the main portion of the building. Exterior access to the basement is by way of a series of concrete steps located in the northeast corner of the courtyard. The basement door is an original stile and rail door with one panel and one light. The interior walls of the basement are triple wythe brick masonry and the floor is concrete. The ceiling is exposed floor structure above which is a reinforced six inch thick concrete slab with eight inch by eight inch concrete beams at three feet on center.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

name of property USDA Tucson Plant Materials Center  
county and state Pima, Arizona

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The interior of the Administration Building consists of a series of offices, storage rooms, a laboratory, a conference room and restrooms. All of the floors are built of concrete slabs, and the 10 foot ceilings are plaster on metal lath. The original interior surfaces of the adobe walls are plastered with a smooth trowelled finish. A centrally located room, originally used as offices but now serving as the reception area, separates the north and south wings. It measures 30 feet wide by 18 feet deep, and is accessed by the main entrance on the east facade, and by the primary courtyard entrance. The north and south interior walls of the room are built of adobe bricks, 12 inches thick. They also function as bearing walls that support portions of the roof framing.

The south wing of the building was originally divided into four large rooms separated by 12 inch thick adobe brick walls. The largest room measured 20 feet by 18 feet, and the smallest 14 feet by 18 feet. The wall separating the westernmost two rooms was removed in 1994 to create a conference room. The interior wall finishes of the rooms were covered with furred out plywood sheet paneling (not original), which was removed in 1994. With the exception of the interior door of the westernmost room, all original doors had been replaced with flush wood doors, and were in turn replaced in 1994 with flush steel doors.

The north wing of the building contains offices, a laboratory, storage rooms, and restrooms. A large 18 foot square office is situated at the east end of the wing. It is separated from a pair of restrooms and a storage room by an original 12 inch thick adobe brick partition wall. The original laboratory is located in the central portion of the north wing and is 31 feet long. An early wood stud and plaster partition wall, which formerly separated the laboratory from two offices on the south, was removed in 1994 to create a larger laboratory. The hallway through the wing was also relocated flush with the south wall at that time. The west end of the wing contains a single room, 10 feet deep by 18 feet wide, that is separated from the laboratory by an original adobe brick partition wall.

Although the 1994 adaptive re-use program required changes in the interior arrangement of office space and other modernization, remodeling was carried out with a high degree of consideration for preserving the original components and historic character where possible. Most interior adobe walls were furred out and covered with sheetrock, however, natural plastered adobe wall surfaces were kept intact on the interior walls adjacent to the courtyard. Ceilings were dropped in some areas, notably over hallways to accommodate new air conditioning ducts and other features, but the natural plastered 10 foot ceiling was preserved in the main reception room and wherever else possible.

### General Utility Building

The General Utility Building is a "U" shaped 2,363 square foot structure used as a shop and maintenance garage for agricultural equipment and as a seed storage facility. It is located approximately 30 feet southwest of the Administration Building, and like the latter is a single story, flat roofed-structure with low parapets and false vigas facing east towards Romero Road. It measures 74 feet wide by 42 feet deep. The width of each ell is 19 feet. The central recessed bay formed by the two opposing wings is covered by a flat, wood framed roof. It is open to the west and features a concrete slab floor. The building is constructed of adobe brick walls, 12 inches thick, which are constructed on concrete foundations and fired brick stem walls. The exterior of the adobe walls are finished with



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

name of property USDA Tucson Plant Materials Center  
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pebble-dashed Portland cement plaster. The building is covered by a flat roof hidden behind low parapets. False wood vigas, approximately three feet on center, are located below the parapets. Attached to the north wall is a 50 foot by 50 foot Lath House built in 1963. The other three sides are surrounded by driveways.

The west wall is symmetrical about the sheltered recessed bay. The wall of the south wing features an eight foot wide doorway with an overhead steel coiling door. The opening originally contained a wood panel overhead door. The west wall of the north wing contains an off center entrance with a wood door and one, four foot wide multiple light steel awning window. The central bay consists of four eight foot wide wood panel overhead garage doors. Each door is separated by an eight inch by ten inch kerfed wood post. The north wall of the building is penetrated by one off center steel sash easement window. The south wall contains two-openings. A four foot wide multiple light steel sash awning window is located off center to the west, and an original doorway, now infilled with plywood, is located at the east end of the wall.

The 74 foot long east wall features four windows and two doorways. A single leaf, non-original flush wood door provides access to the north wing. Three evenly located steel sash multiple light awning windows penetrate the central portion of the wall. A solid core flush door, that is a replacement of the original door, gives access to the automobile repair garage. To its south is a small steel sash casement bathroom window.

The interior of the south wing contains a large woodworking and metal shop, measuring 17 feet wide by 27 feet deep. It has a concrete slab floor and a metal lath and plaster ceiling. The interior surfaces of the adobe walls have a smooth trowelled plaster finish. An original 12 inch thick adobe brick partition wall separates the shop from two storage rooms and a small bathroom on the east. One of those rooms is used for tool storage and measures 12 feet square. Access to that room from the shop is from a non-original doorway cut into the adobe partition wall.

The four stall automobile maintenance shop at the central bay measures 20 feet deep by 34 feet long. It is separated from the north wing of the building by an adobe wall which also serves to support part of the roof framing. Interior walls are finished with smooth trowelled plaster and the ceiling is plaster on metal lath.

The interior of the north wing contains two rooms whose original functions are unknown. The largest room is at the east end of the wing and measures 28 feet deep by 17 feet wide. It is currently used as a conference room and the original wall finishes are concealed by furred out sheet paneling. The west room measures 17 feet wide by 12 feet deep and is currently used as an employee's lounge.

Beneath the north wing is a full basement measuring 18 feet wide by 40 feet long. Its walls are constructed of cast-in-place reinforced concrete and it has a concrete slab floor. The basement ceiling is the underside of the first floor structure which is built of a six inch thick concrete slab on seven inch by five inch concrete beams spaced at three feet four inches on center. A one foot by one foot reinforced cast concrete girder is centrally located and spans the length of the room. There are two exterior entrances to the basement, one on the west wall, and one on the east wall. Both feature original wood panel and sash, stile and rail doors, and each are accessed by an exterior flight of concrete steps.

The building is also scheduled for rehabilitation when funds become available. Although showing superficial deterioration from 60 plus years of use, the building has been well maintained and is structurally sound. It is still being used in its original capacity.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

name of property USDA Tucson Plant Materials Center  
county and state Pima, Arizona

### Summary of Significance

The Tucson Plant Materials Center (the Center) is a product of the Great Depression and resulting New Deal Legislation. It is one of the first group of 48 such centers created by the federal government in part to address widespread economic depression, unemployment, and the "dust bowl" conditions that had severely curtailed agricultural production in the west and midwest, producing mass dislocation of farmers as well as agricultural and commercial support personnel and businesses. Three regional plant materials centers were created in the Southwest U.S., with Tucson serving as the headquarters and clearinghouse for all regional activities. These Centers were established for the purpose of conducting plant research to address soil conservation problems, and were constructed using Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) enrollees who were housed on site.

The Tucson Center's Administration and General Utility Buildings, built in 1935 and 1936 respectively, are the first built and largest of the eight original buildings, and the only two that have survived. Both buildings were constructed of locally available materials and are fine examples of CCC work and of the Pueblo Revival style of architecture which was regionally popular in the 1920s and 1930s. The first was rehabilitated for adaptive reuse in 1994, and the second will be similarly treated as funding allows. Both buildings continue in essentially the same functions for which they were constructed, and the Tucson Center remains one of only 26 such facilities still in operation in the contiguous United States and Alaska. The two buildings are considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register because they retain overall integrity of design, setting, and association; because they are associated with federal agricultural, conservation, and public works programs stemming from the Great Depression that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; and because they are fine representations of the Pueblo Revival architectural style, a distinctive style of adobe architecture applied in this case to a federal facility. The remaining buildings and structures at the Center are relatively recent in origin, are not notable for their style or architecture and have been determined ineligible for inclusion in the Register.

### Chronology and History

In response to the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Federal Government, led by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, passed a variety of legislation designed to revitalize the nation's economy. One of the most important components of the New Deal legislation was the National Industrial Recovery Act passed on June 16, 1933. One provision of the Act was the allotment of \$5,000,000 to the Department of the Interior "for soil-erosion prevention works on public and private lands."

On August 25, 1933, the Soil Erosion Service (predecessor to the Soil Conservation Service) was established within the Department of Interior as a temporary organization. Operation of the Soil Erosion Service started on September 19, 1933, with Hugh H. Bennett appointed the first Director. Bennett's initial action as director was to implement a "reconnaissance soil erosion survey" in order to get a clear idea of the extent and location of soil erosion in the United States. Then in March 1935, the Soil Erosion Service was transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. With the help of extensive lobbying efforts by Bennett, Congress passed the Soil Conservation Act on April 27, 1935. The purpose of the Act was "to provide permanently for the control and prevention of soil erosion and thereby to preserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of reservoirs, and maintain the navigability of rivers and harbors, protect public health, public lands and relieve unemployment."

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

name of property USDA Tucson Plant Materials Center  
county and state Pima, Arizona

The Soil Conservation Act directed the Department of Agriculture to establish an agency to be known as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). Although it was clearly the intent of the Act to make permanent the existing Soil Erosion Service, the change of name was a conscious effort to give the name a more positive ring and to invest the agency with a conservation charge broader than erosion control. The Act specifically included dealing with the issue of national unemployment by the use of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Hugh H. Bennett was designated Chief of the SCS.

Soon after the formation of the SCS, over 150 CCC Camps were transferred to its jurisdiction from the Forest Service. This increased work force enabled the SCS to extend its demonstration work. By June 30, 1936, the SCS had in operation 147 demonstration projects, 23 research stations, 454 CCC camps, and 48 soil conservation nurseries. One of these nurseries was located in Tucson, Arizona, and is now known as the Tucson Plant Materials Center.

The purpose of the Soil Conservation Nurseries was to propagate and study native and exotic vegetation for potential use in regional soil conservation project areas. The nurseries propagated and observed unproven species in a controlled setting. Those that proved promising for project areas were rapidly propagated to increase the species stock for further study. Those species were then tested in observational plots at branch nurseries, at field evaluation plots on federal land, or on cooperating farms or ranches.

After thorough trial, The Tucson Plant Materials Center was established by the Soil Conservation Service in the summer of 1934 as the Tucson Nursery. The site consisted of seventy-eight acres of land. Eighteen acres was leased from the University of Arizona on the southern end of the University Experiment Farm located on Romero Road. The remaining 60 acres was secured from the City of Tucson through the University of Arizona. Known as the Tucson City Farm, it was located one mile west of the Romero Road site on the west bank of the Santa Cruz River. Forty acres of that site was used from 1934 through 1940 as seed production fields. After that time, the SCS utilized all of the University Experiment Farm's 28 acres of fields at the Romero Road site for that purpose, as well as for observational plantings and drought resistant study.

The Soil Conservation Service operated the Tucson Plant Materials Center from 1935 to 1952. The Center represented one of three nurseries serving the southwestern United States. The other two were located in Safford, Arizona, and Shiprock, New Mexico. Due in part to its close location to the University of Arizona, with its strong agricultural research programs, the Tucson Nursery served as the headquarters of the three nurseries. In this role, it served as the "clearing house" for all regional nursery activities. F.J. Crider was Regional Director and J.A. Downs was Superintendent of the Tucson Nursery in the mid 1930s.

In 1952 the operation of the site was transferred to the University of Arizona where it remained for ten years. In 1962 the operation of the facility was transferred back to the SCS. After taking charge of the facility, the SCS initiated a "rehabilitation" program at the site. As noted in Section 7, *Description*, the Bunkhouse was demolished to make way for a new Seed Building, and the original Green House was razed and replaced with a native specimen plant garden. The USDA, Agricultural Research Service also erected a large steel clad frame building north of the Seed Building at this time, and two steel frame vehicle or tool shelters were added along with four small greenhouses. The program also resulted in reroofing and repainting of the older buildings and installation of a new well and pump.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section   8   Page   3  

name of property   USDA Tucson Plant Materials Center    
county and state   Pima, Arizona  

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Beginning in 1991, as the result of plans by NRCS to demolish and replace most of the original structures, the complex was reviewed for eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Five of the original buildings, notable for their stuccoed adobe construction and Pueblo Revival Style architecture, were determined eligible for inclusion. Three of these - the Machinery Shed and the Superintendent's Cottage and Garage, were demolished after recording for inclusion in the Historic American Building Survey. The remaining Administration and General Utility Buildings, which are the most prominent and the first constructed of the original buildings, were identified for rehabilitation and adaptive re-use. Rehabilitation of the Administration Building was completed in 1994 and similar treatment will be accorded the Utility Building as funding allows. Although showing superficial deterioration from 60 plus years of use, the General Utility Building has been well maintained and is structurally sound.

The Administration and General Utility Buildings, built in 1935 and 1936 respectively, are significant for their association with the initial construction and development of the first soil conservation nursery established in Arizona by the Soil Conservation Service. The Tucson Nursery represents one of the first group of 48 soil conservation nurseries built by the Soil Conservation Service from the beginning of 1935 through June, 1936 in response to New Deal legislation. The two buildings are the first built and largest of the eight original buildings, and the only two that have survived. They were constructed of locally available materials and are fine examples both of CCC work and of the Pueblo Revival style of architecture, which was regionally popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Both buildings continue in essentially the same functions for which they were constructed, and the Tucson Center remains one of only 26 such facilities still in operation in the contiguous United States and Alaska. The two buildings are considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register because they retain overall integrity of design, setting, and association; because they are associated with federal agricultural, conservation, and public works programs stemming from the Great Depression that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; and because they are fine representations of the Pueblo Revival style, a distinctive variety of adobe architecture applied in this case to a federal facility.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

name of property Tucson Plant Materials Center  
county and state Pima, Arizona

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1934-35, Various Issues

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National Park Service:  
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National Park Service  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

name of property Tucson Plant Materials Center  
county and state Pima, Arizona

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### Location:

The property lies about four miles north of downtown Tucson, Arizona, within a portion of the Southeast 1/4 of the Southeast 1/4 of the Southwest 1/4 of Section 27, Township 13 South, Range 13 East, G. & S.R.B. & M., Pima County, Arizona.

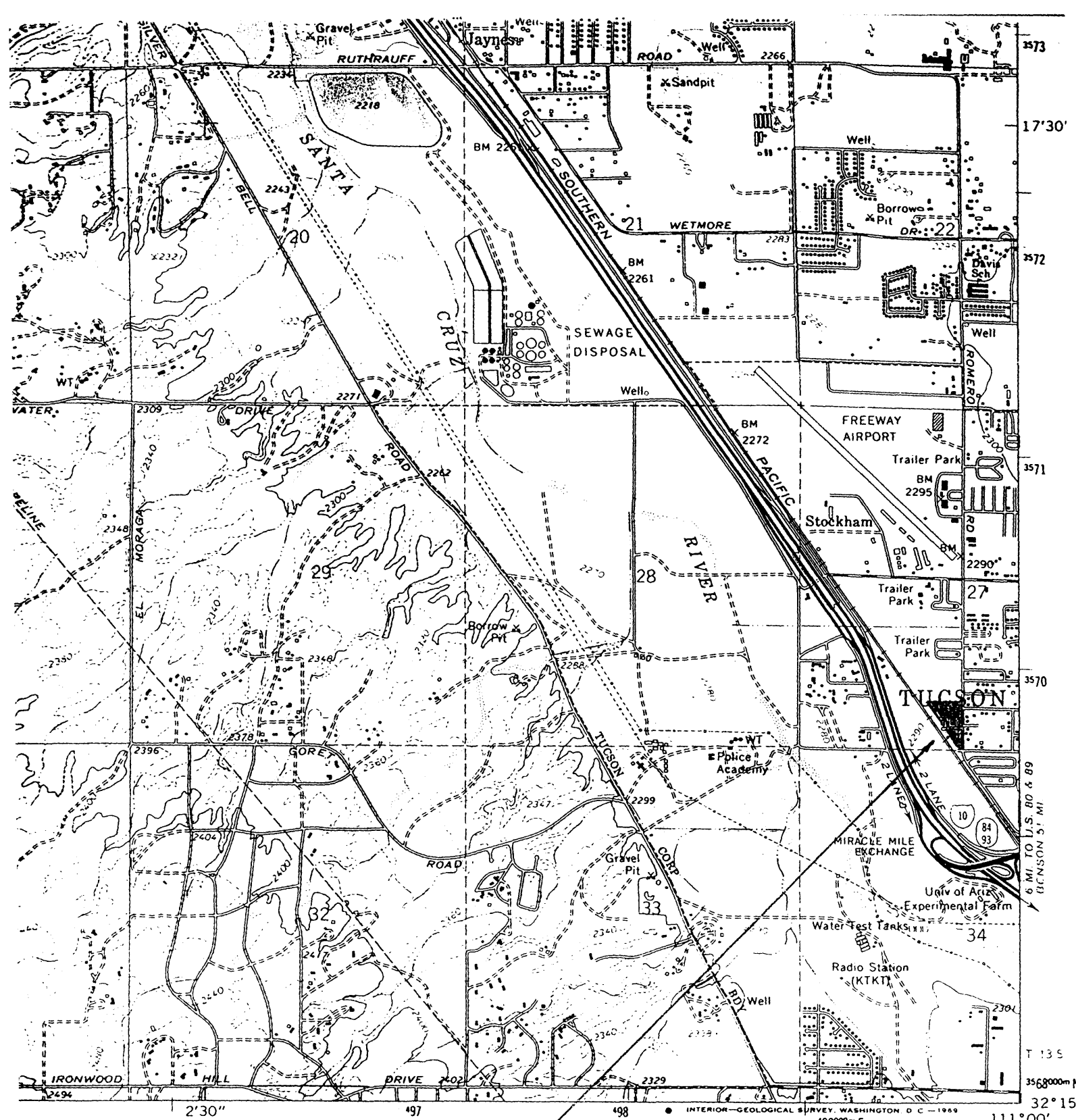
### Narrative Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of the southernmost 5 acres of Parcel 'A' of the Plant Materials Center survey, described as follows:

All that portion of the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter (SE 1/4 SE 1/4 SW 1/4) of Section Twenty Seven (27) in Township Thirteen (13) South, Range Thirteen (13) East of the Gila and Salt River Base and Meridian, lying east of the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way, containing five (5) acres more or less.

### Boundary Justification

The east, south, and west boundaries are formed by existing PMC property survey boundaries. The north boundary was drawn so as to enclose the Administration and General Utility Buildings (the two contributing buildings), as well as the surrounding landscaped grounds (including the site of the former arboretum which NRCS hopes to restore), and a representative portion of the extensive agricultural fields which open to the north. None of the other structures, buildings, objects, or agricultural fields have been counted as contributing elements or as warranting inclusion in this nomination.



# SUBJECT



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

## ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty
- Medium-duty
- Light-duty
- Unimproved dirt
- Interstate Route
- State Route

JAYNES, ARIZ.  
N3215—W11100/7.5

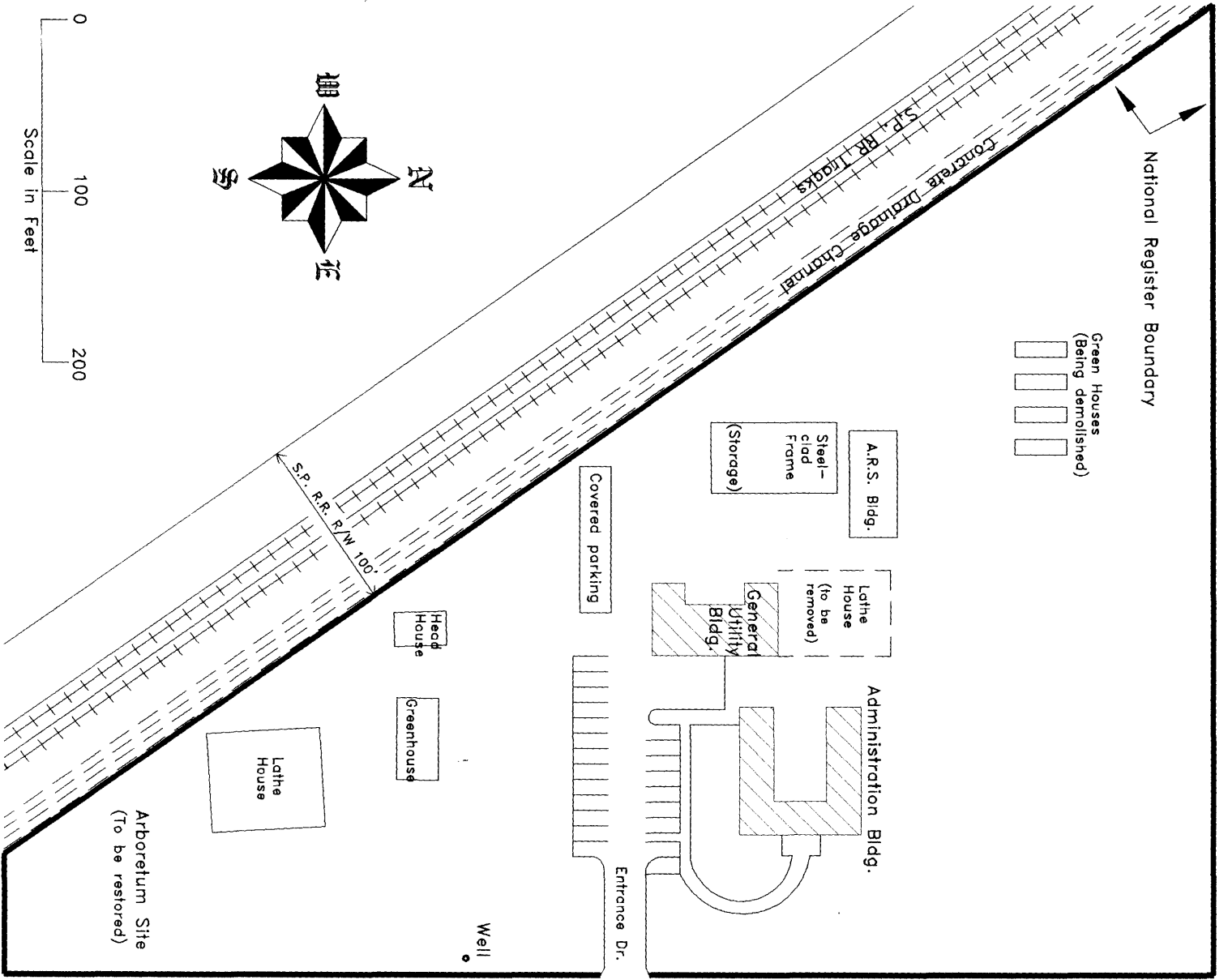
INGTON, D. C. 20242  
REQUEST

1968

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C.—1969  
499000m E.

T 13 S  
3568000m N  
32° 15'  
111° 00'

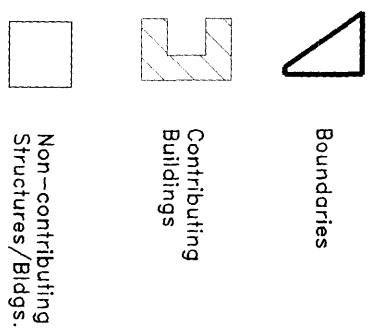
(TUCSON 5.1 MI)



Romero Road

## National Register Boundaries Tucson Plant Materials Center

(All that portion of the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 27, Township 13S., Range 13E., lying east of the Southern Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way; containing 5 acres, more or less.)



### KEY MAP

Section 27, T.13 South, R. 13 East

