

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Arizona	
COUNTY: Pima	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**FINAL**  
JUNE 2011  
FINAL FROM SHPO

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Cordova House

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
None

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
173-177 North Meyer

CITY OR TOWN:  
Tucson

STATE: Arizona      CODE: 04      COUNTY: Pima      CODE: 019

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mrs. Maria Navaretta Cordova

STREET AND NUMBER:  
173 North Meyer

CITY OR TOWN:  
Tucson

STATE:  
Arizona

CODE:  
04

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
City of Tucson Community Development Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
250 West Alameda

CITY OR TOWN:  
Tucson

STATE:  
Arizona

CODE:  
04

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Tucson Historical Sites Survey (Tucson Community Development)

DATE OF SURVEY: September, 1969     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
City of Tucson, Department of Community Development

STREET AND NUMBER:  
250 West Alameda

CITY OR TOWN:  
Tucson

STATE:  
Arizona

CODE:  
04

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Arizona

COUNTY: Pima

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

NOTE: Because of pending legal difficulties between the City of Tucson and the Cordova family, historical surveyors and others have been denied access to the interior of the house. When this situation improves and an inspection of the house's interior is permitted, this report will be amended accordingly.

The present structure is "L" shaped in plan with the short leg of the "L" facing east and Meyer Avenue. The house is a single story dwelling constructed of unfired adobe block. Walls are approximately 24 inches in thickness. The exterior, and, presumably, the interior, walls are covered with cement plaster.

Fenestration is simple and direct. Windows are double hung and embellished with only the simplest of wood trim. Doors on the Meyer Avenue facade are simple panel doors; narrow, fixed lights border the doors on three sides. There are no porches or roof overhangs; in typical Mexican Town house style, the doors open directly to the street and walk.

The roof is flat. Presumably, the roof is framed with the traditional vegas overlaid with lesser members and the whole covered with adobe mud. A slight parapet, probably added at a later date, is created by two courses of fired adobe brick laid around the roof perimeter.

The oldest portion of the Cordova House is thought to be the rear section of the "L". The front or Meyer Avenue portion was probably added at a later date to serve as a retail outlet. However, deed history is not precise about this point.

What is indicated through deed and family history is the strong probability that the house dates back to the mid 1850's or even earlier. The house indicates little change has taken place in its facade. The records demonstrate that the Cordova House has been continuously occupied since the time when Mexico could claim Tucson as a northern frontier town.

Additional information is xeroxed and enclosed. This information is taken from the Tucson Historic Sites Committee report. Gordon Heck, Architect, AIA, surveyed the Cordova House. The City of Tucson, via Urban Renewal, is attempting to acquire the structure and have it restored.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                        |                                       |                                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1848 (?); 1862

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |                                                  |                                      |                                         |                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | losophy                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house and a nearby "sister structure" were cited as "Must Save" sites in a report prepared by the Historic Areas Committee, Tucson Community Development Program, under the auspices of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The property has a tangled and uncertain deed history. However, evidence indicates that the house may be the oldest surviving structure in Tucson; dating as early as 1848. The house certainly existed in 1862, according to the Fergusson Map of 1862. Inferences drawn from the histories of families associated with the house push the date into the period of mid 1800's.

The Cordova House almost certainly dates back to the Mexican period, i.e., prior to 1854. It is also the City's oldest continuously occupied residence. The house is not isolated from similar, later structures and the area will eventually be nominated as an architectural district.

Pending court settlements, the City will acquire the property. The City of Tucson intends to lease the property to a local historic preservation group who will restore the property.

Currently, private construction in the rear of the property may threaten the house's integrity. National Register listing is requested on the basis of the house's value to the City of Tucson as an architectural entity which has survived from the period when Tucson and all Arizona south of the Gila River were once part of Mexico. Register listing will lend the necessary recognition and prestige to insure that the site is not permanently impaired.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Information submitted by the Arizona Historical Society,  
Tucson, Arizona.

Tucson Historical Sites Survey, September, 1969, HUD.

Report of Tucson Historic Preservation Consultants, 1969.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		32°	13'	25"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		110°	58'	27"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Robert Fink, Historic Sites Preservation Officer**

ORGANIZATION: **Arizona State Parks Board** DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1688 West Adams**

CITY OR TOWN: **Phoenix** STATE: **Arizona 85007** CODE: **04**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name *Dennis McCarthy*  
**DENNIS MCCARTHY**

Title Director, Ariz. State Parks Board

Date 4/18/72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Cordova House

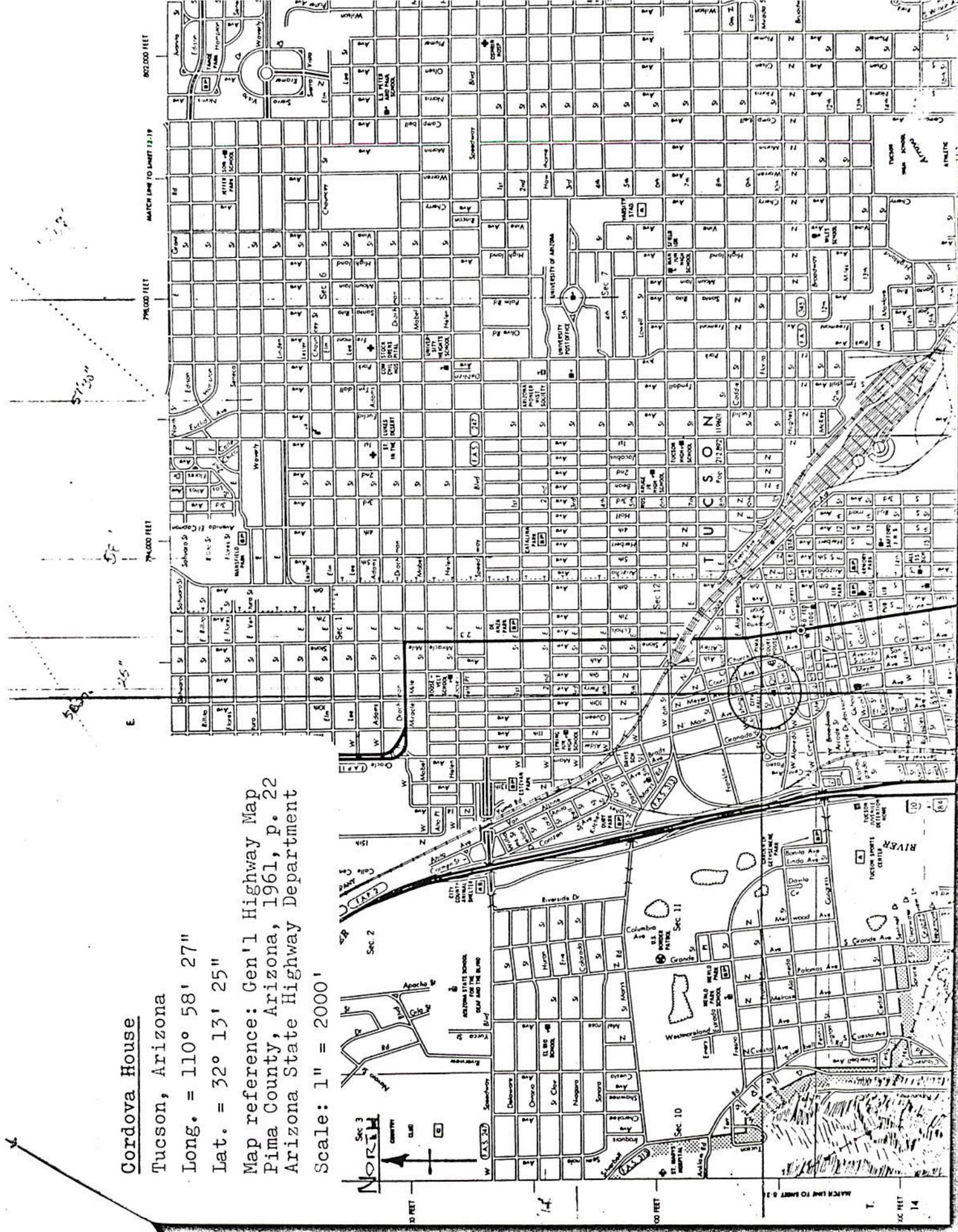
Tucson, Arizona

Long. = 110° 58' 27"

Lat. = 32° 13' 25"

Map reference: Gen'l Highway Map  
Pima County, Arizona, 1961, p. 22  
Arizona State Highway Department

Scale: 1" = 2000'



**Cordova House**

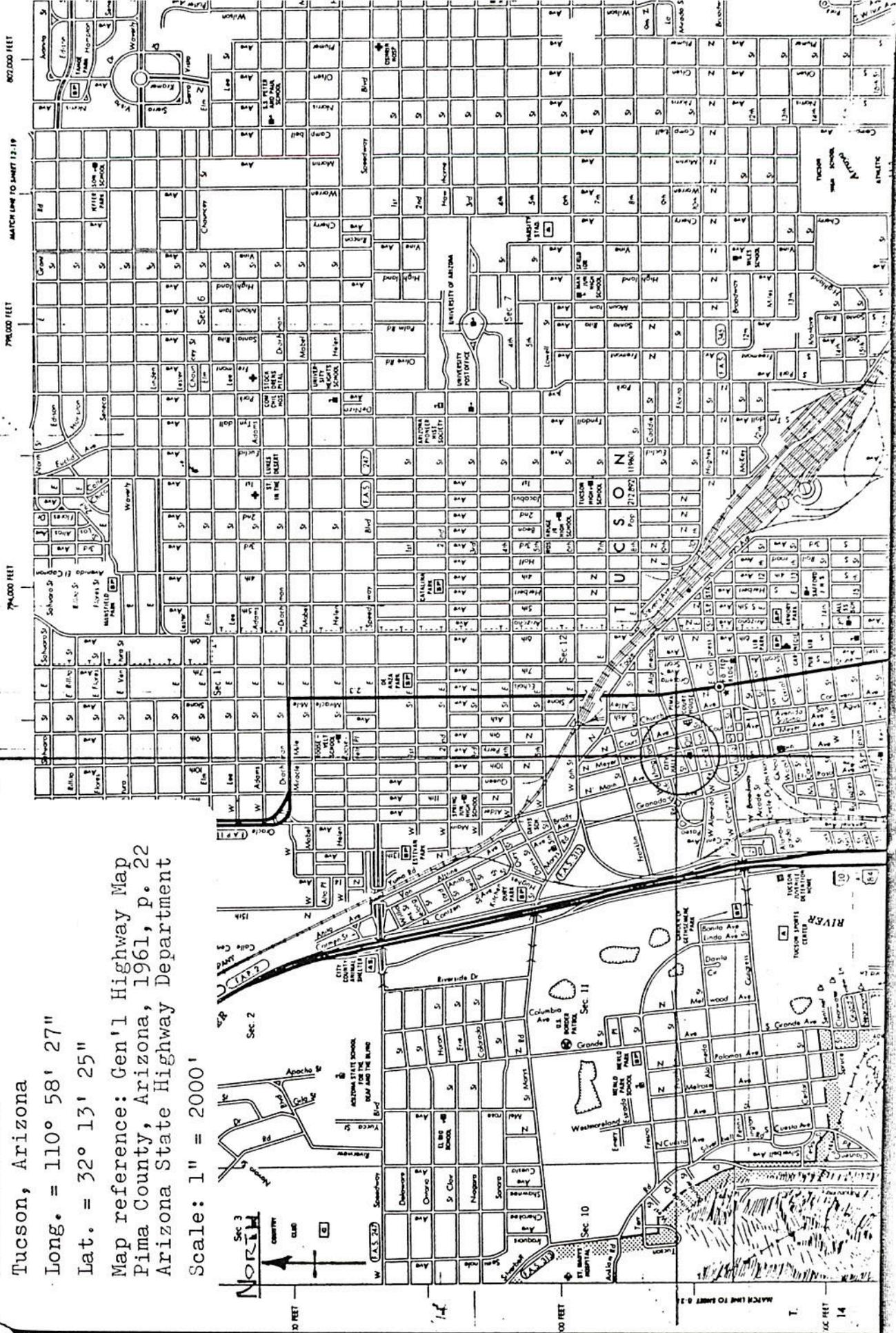
Tucson, Arizona

Long. = 110° 58' 27"

Lat. = 32° 13' 25"

Map reference: Gen'l Highway Map  
Pima County, Arizona, 1961, p. 22  
Arizona State Highway Department

Scale: 1" = 2000'



HISTORICAL SUMMARY (significance, physical history, events, personages, biographical details, sources of information):

#### CORDOBA PROPERTIES

Although the Consultants did not succeed in gaining access to the two Cordoba houses, a resume' of the family and property history is included for later use when the structures become available for study.

#### CORDOBA FAMILY

The family history related to the two homes at 108 West Washington and 173 North Meyer Streets is confused. The homes have passed through many hands and the earliest ownership is uncertain. The first owners and perhaps builders of these houses may have been members of the Ramirez family, including Eustaquio, who obtained a house from Don Clemente Telles in 1855 which reportedly had been built by Telles' father about 1810-1815. There was also a Theodore Ramirez who died in 1871 at the age of 94. He had served the Mexican government for years as Commissary Agent at Tucson, and owned property in the presidio area. There are other members of Ramirez families who held property in the area as well, and it was a Maria Ramirez who sold a house to the Ortega-Coronado family in 1883.

One point is clear: neither house represents the continual occupation of the Cordoba family, for the Cordobas acquired the property only in the 1890's. The homes best represent the continual use of early Mexican buildings by Mexican and early American settlers.

These two properties, shown on the Fergusson Map of 1862, have a tangled and uncertain deed history. However, it is likely that the two houses are

the oldest surviving structures in Tucson. The present Cordoba house, 173 North Meyer (Lot 8) is reputed to have been built in 1848, but there is no documentary proof for this. In essence the tradition is based on the story that a Senorita Refugio Diaz came to Tucson about 1840, with her father, Jose Maria Diaz. In 1850, Refugio married a Manuel Carrillo, who reportedly came to Tucson in the 1790's, and who in 1848 built the house at 173 North Meyer Street. The couple moved into the house in 1868. The story continues that Manuel Carrillo also owned the house at 108 West Washington Street (Lot 2) and together they were known as the "two L's". The house on Meyer Street was reputed also to have been used to quarter U. S. Army officers in the 1850's. When Mr. Carrillo died, Refugio married Severin Rambaud.

Of more relevant interest is the fact that members of the Diaz family did own property in this immediate area in 1862 (Oury Deed Book), but it is difficult to ascribe these homes to them. In addition, it was the City of Tucson in 1872, under the re-survey, which deeded this property (Lot 8) to a James Lee. Lee was married to Maria Ramirez, who deeded the property to Sabino Ortega, deed recorded in 1883, and it was Carmen Ortega, Mrs. Manuel Coronado, who deeded the property to Mrs. (Refugio Diaz Carrillo) Severin Rambaud, recorded July 11, 1896. Mrs. Rambaud was the great aunt of Maria Navarette Cordoba, present owner of the property.

Lot 2, 108 West Washington Street, a property purportedly containing part of the original presidio wall (completed in 1781), first appears legally in a deed from the City of Tucson of 1872, recorded November 29, 1881, to Jesus Diaz. It was later acquired by J. Knox Corbett, deed recorded September 15, 1889.

Because of these confusions, the conflicting and inaccurate early legal descriptions, and the uncertain family recollections, it is impossible to

substantiate the claims of high age for the two houses. They were in existence in 1862, and probably earlier, but not in the ownership of the present family forebears. Nevertheless, every effort should be made to preserve and restore them as important architectural landmarks in Tucson.

#### SOURCES

Fergusson Map, 1862 -- Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society.

Sanborn Fire Map, 1883 -- Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society.

Register of Claims and Abstract of Titles for the Town of Tucson

(Recorded by William S. Oury, 1862)--Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society

City of Tucson Block Books, n. d. -- Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society.

Records of the Pima County Recorder's Office -- Deed Book 7, p. 786;

Book 7, p. 788; Book 28, p. 2; Book 10, p. 724; Book 15, p. 377;

Book 17, p. 508; Book 32, p. 478; Pima County Court House, Tucson.

Tucson City Directory, 1881, 1883.

Pima County Book of Deeds No. 1, Pima County Court House, Tucson.

Pima County, Old Record Book B Sylvester Mowry, copy at Arizona Pioneers'

Historical Society.

Tucson Daily Citizen, February 15, 1963 and April 26, 1965.

In very brief form, the following alternatives exist for the Cordova House located 173 North Meyer Avenue, Tucson:

- a. The Cordova House remains intact/the Art Center adjusts its own site location in deference to the Cordova House's integrity.
- b. The Cordova House is dismantled-either completely or to be relocated to another location/ the Art Center goes ahead according to plan/ the Cordova House is removed from the National Register of Historic Places.
- c. A portion of the rear of the Cordova House is removed to permit construction/ the Art Center is built according to plan/ the Cordova House is removed from the National Register of Historic Places.
- d. A portion of the rear of the Cordova House is removed; allowing egress to the construction site of the Art Center; the rear portion is replaced in a manner identical with the original appearance/the Art Center is completed/ the Cordova House remains listed upon the National Register of Historic Places.

Office Copy

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION OFFICER  
REQUEST FOR EVALUATION

ARIZONA HISTORICAL ADVISORY COMMISSION  
HISTORIC SITES REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE

NAME OF SITE, STRUCTURE, ETC:

Cordova House

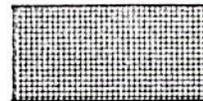
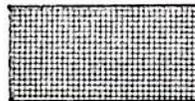
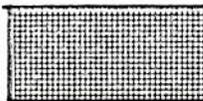
LOCATION: 173-177 N. Meyer Ave., Tucson

PRESERVATION OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

There exists a state of urgency regarding the future of the Cordova House due to planned construction in the immediate area. Recognition of the House may alleviate this threat.

The Cordova House is recommended for its architectural antiquity. National Register nomination is advised.

DATE: Feb. 1, 1972



N O M I N A T I O N   F O R M

ARIZONA STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC SITES

1. NATURE AND NAMES OF PLACE

Residence: Cordova House  
(commercial store fronting Meyer; residence to rear)

2. LOCATION

173-177 North Meyer Avenue  
City of Tucson - Block 183, lots 1 & 8

3. ENDANGERED    yes.

4. SIGNIFICANCE

History  
 Archaeology  
 Architecture  
 Culture

5. INTEGRITY

All Original  
 Changes Minor\*  
 Much Altered  
 Moved or Re-constructed

6. CONDITION

Sound  
 Restorable  
 Ruinous  
 Site Only

\*extent of change unknown

7. HISTORY OR JUSTIFICATION

Access to the interior of the Cordova House has been denied previous surveyors. Ownership and deed history investigations have shown that the house was certainly in existence by 1862. There is good evidence that the house may date to the 1840's, thus making it the oldest surviving structure in Tucson.

The house, along with another Cordova property are listed as "must save" sites in the Tucson Historical Sites report by the Historic Areas Committee of Tucson. The report, financed with Urban Renewal funds, is an inventory by professionals and laymen of Tucson's remaining historical sites.

In addition to its architectural antiquity, the house is significant for its association with Latin names familiar to the early Tucson scene: Diaz, Carrillo, Ortega and others.

8. Photo

Attach

Recent

Photo

Here

9. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION    FEATURES    SIZE

Until access is made into the house's interior, little can be said for the house's original portions, etc.

Stone foundations

Unbaked adobe walls; stuccoed

Wood sash windows are double hung & unadorned, flat trim.

Doors open directly to the sidewalk via two risers ; flat trim; horizontal door heads; transom lites on some doors; Flat roof with parapet capping of tile. "L"shape in plan. Older section to rear.

**10. PRESENT AND POTENTIAL USES**

Presently, the house serves as a family retail outlet and bail bond office. The residence portion is in the rear.

**11. OWNERS**

**Original:** Manuel Carrillo (?)  
**Present:** Mrs. Maria N. Cordova  
**Address:** 173-177 N. Meyer Ave.

**12. ACCESS CONTROLLED BY**

**Name:** Present owners.  
**Phone:**  
**Address:**

**13. INVENTORIED BY**

**Organization:** ASPB  
**Person:** R.F.  
**Phone:** 271-4174  
**Address:** 1688 W. Adams  
Phoenix

**14. SOURCE CONSULTED**

Gordon Heck survey of property for Tucson Historic Sites report, Tucson Community Development Program, 1969

**Date Surveyed:** January, 1972

**15. REMARKS**

The future ownership of the house may be uncertain. The Cordova family are presently contesting urban renewal plans to acquire the property and to turn the same property over to the City. Endangering the oldest portion of the house is a museum building program by the Tucson Art Center. Plans by the Center call for the removal of a portion of the rear of the Cordova house to make room for the new museum facility.

N O M I N A T I O N   F O R M  
ARIZONA STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC SITES

1. NATURE AND NAMES OF PLACE

Residence - Ramirez - Cordova Houses

2. LOCATION

173 N. Meyer Ave. & 201 N. Meyer, 100-108 W.  
TUCSON, ARIZONA Washington St.

3. ENDANGERED

YES, A portion is scheduled for demolition.

4. SIGNIFICANCE

5. INTEGRITY

6. CONDITION

History  
 Archaeology  
 Architecture  
 Culture

All Original  
 Changes Minor  
 Much Altered  
 Moved or Re-constructed

Sound  
 Restorable  
 Ruinous  
 Site Only

7. HISTORY OR JUSTIFICATION

See Appended sheets.

Preservation endorsed by Tucson Historic Preservation Consultants and Tucson Historic Areas Committee; as well as AHS.

House at 173 N. Meyer may be oldest house in Arizona, dating from Mexican period in part. House at 201 N. Meyer believed to contain part of original presidio wall.

8. Photo

9. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION FEATURES SIZE

Attach

attached

Recent

Photo

Here

N O M I N A T I O N   F O R M  
ARIZONA STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC SITES

1. NATURE AND NAMES OF PLACE

Residence - RAMIREZ - Cordova Houses

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173 N. Meyer Ave. & 201 N. Meyer, 100-108 W.  
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9. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION    FEATURES    SIZE

Attach *attached*

Recent

Photo

Here