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# TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

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**EcoPlan Associates, Inc.**

*Environmental Science & Resource Economics*

# Technical Memorandum

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**Date:** 14 October 2005

**To:** Mark Brodbeck

**From:** Gabriela Dorigo

**Project No.:** 05-830

**Project Name:** I-10 Reliever

**Regarding:** Eligibility Assessment for Two Residential Properties

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As requested by HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR), EcoPlan Associates Inc. (EcoPlan) assessed the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of two properties. These properties—both farmhouses, currently located within the City of Phoenix (COP) limits, were built before the areas were incorporated. One of the farmhouses—the Rich farmhouse—is located at 6304 W. Dobbins Rd., south of the Salt River, the other one is located at 7316 W. Lower Buckeye Rd., north of the Salt River (Figure 1).

## Methodology

Because the eligibility assessment conducted by EcoPlan will be part of a larger study conducted by HDR (Brodbeck 2005), and given the timeframe provided, no new historic context was developed for analyzing these properties. Instead *A Historic Context for Agricultural Properties in the Lower Salt River Valley* (Brodbeck 2005) was used. Cultural resource records collections housed at the City of Phoenix Historic Preservation Office were consulted for information regarding these properties and earlier surveys in the areas where the two properties are located. Two studies—although not specific to these areas—were consulted: *South Mountain Agricultural Area, Historic Resources Survey* (Ryden et al. 1989), and *Phoenix, Rural and Estate Architecture* (Woodward and Osmon 1991).

To assess the eligibility of these properties, historic and current aerial photographs were compared, tax and deed records housed at the Maricopa County Assessor and Recorder's offices were consulted, research was conducted at Arizona State University (ASU) Libraries and Phoenix Public Library (PPL), and the properties were closely inspected. The PPL's biographical database and ASU's Arizona and Southwestern and Arizona Historical Foundation indexes were consulted specifically to explore the potential of these properties to be eligible under NRHP Criterion B. Because these houses, although currently located within the COP limits, were built before the areas where they are located were incorporated, city directories did not yield any information and it was not possible to find building permits (the COP does not have the relevant records, and according to a Maricopa County employee, the county does not retain old records).

## Results

Both farmhouses are recommended as not eligible to the NRHP due to a general lack of historical and architectural significance. They fail to convey the character of a historical rural residence or farm house in the context of the agricultural development of the Lower Salt River valley; no significant persons appear to be associated to these properties; and they lack architectural distinction.

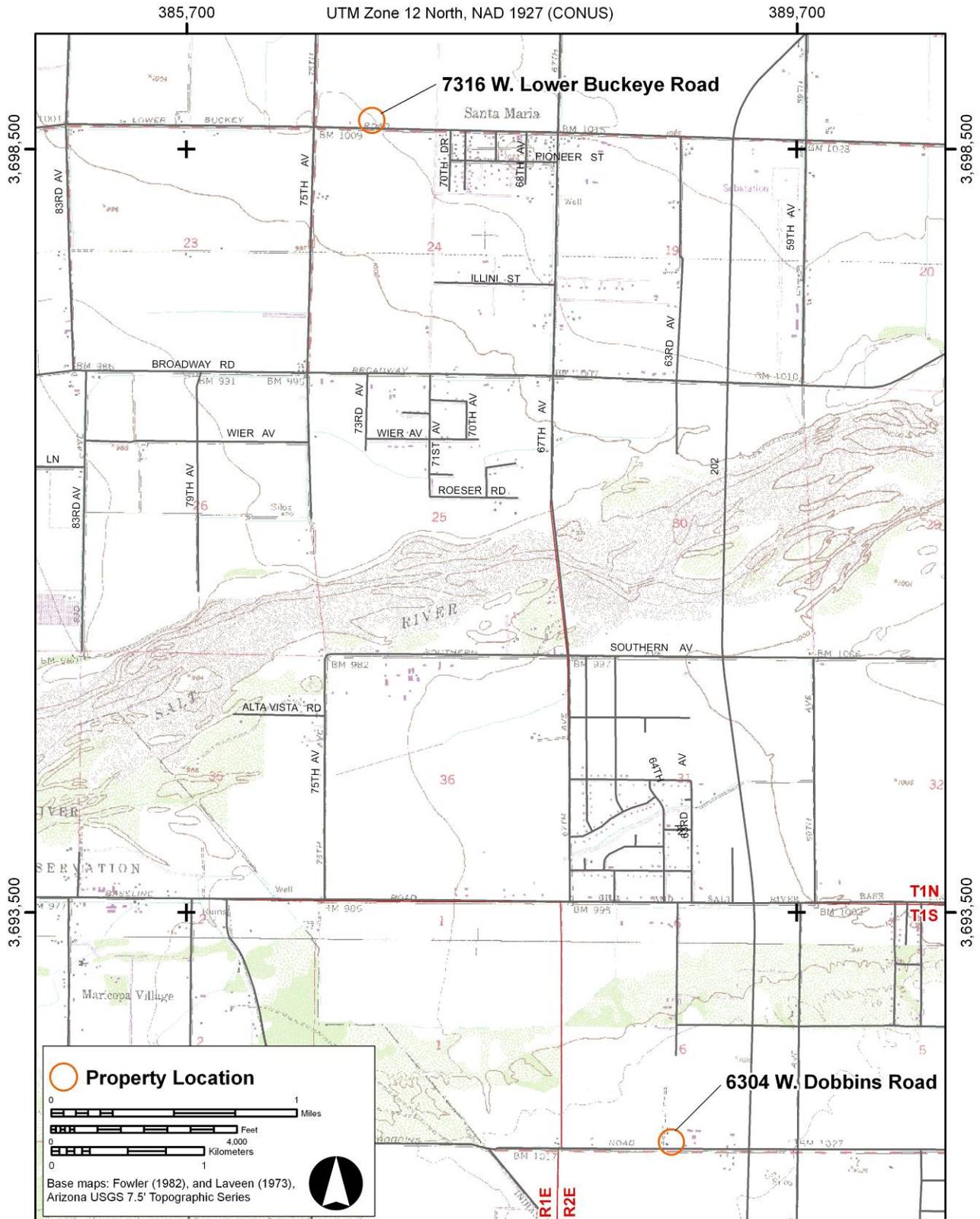


Figure 1. Cultural resources location

## RICH FARMHOUSE

Address	6304 W Dobbins Rd., Phoenix
Location	E 1/2 of the E 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 6, Township 1 S, Range 2 E
Landform	alluvial terrace at the confluence of the Gila and Salt Rivers
Elevation	1,007 ft
Parcel dimensions	325 ft by 1270 ft (9.75 acres)
Land jurisdiction	private
UTM coordinates	388854 m E, 3691785 m N
USGS map	Laveen, Arizona
Property type	farmhouse
Built in	1950

### Description

The Rich house, depicted in Figures 2 – 5, is located in the Laveen area, with the Salt River to the north, the Gila River to the west and south, and South Mountain to the east and south. The property is within the City of Phoenix limits, although the area had not been incorporated when the property was built. The Rich house is located on the north side of West Dobbins Rd., on the NW corner of Dobbins Rd. and 63<sup>rd</sup>. Ave. (if 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave. continued north), on a subdivided 10-acre parcel. Although changes have occurred in the surrounding area since the house was built—a dairy and a house to the east of the property are of more recent construction, the area still maintains a rural character. The house occupies the SW corner of the 325 by 1270 feet elongated parcel. The property is currently associated with surrounding agricultural fields (refer to Figure 3).

The property is separated from Dobbins Rd. by two irrigation canals, a concrete canal with bridges over it to access the property next to the road, and an unlined canal, parallel to the first one and north of it. Another canal at the rear of the house separates the house area from the agricultural fields. Trees separate the house from the newer house to the east. The parcel is fenced, with a lower fence around the house. A utility line east of the building traverses the property in a north-south direction. The house is set back approximately sixty feet from the property line. Behind the house there is a small outbuilding. No other buildings or structures are present on the parcel. The area immediately surrounding the house is overgrown with weeds. Crops are being grown on the rest of the parcel. (refer to Figures 3 and 4)

Before the Rich house was built the parcel was occupied by older buildings (refer to Figure 2). According to Real Estate Solutions records, and corroborated by historic aerial photographs, the house was built in 1950. Sometime between the 1970s and early 1980s—probably related to changed ownership—the site where the house is located was altered, from an elongated to a more square site, and trees near the house were removed. (Because land subdivision and ownership change over time, the “site” refers to the area where the house is located.) From the aerial photographs it appears that there were several small outbuildings associated with the house at that time. Normally, the residential component of an agricultural property is located amid a cluster of trees. The fact that there are no trees surrounding the building, and that none appear to have been present since the mid 1980s, may indicate that it has not had a residential use in recent years. The house does not appear to be currently occupied.

The building is a one story early ranch house, with a clear horizontal emphasis and a generally rectilinear and almost symmetrical layout. The house, facing south, has a shortened U shape floor plan with the right leg wider than the left one. A front porch is created between the two legs. A low pitched gable roof covers the house and extends over the porch. The U legs also are covered by low pitch gable roofs that intersect

the main one at right angles (cross-gabled roofs). The house is on a concrete slab foundation. The painted brick walls have a break (protruding brick line), approximately at a third of their height, which constitutes the only detail of the walls. A brick column stands in the center of the porch, aligned with the exterior walls. The gables, which have ventilation openings, are composed of board-and-batten wood siding painted the same color as the brick. Asphalt shingles cover the roof. Two metal vents are located near the roof ridge. Metal casement windows with a fixed central pane and operable sides characterize the house. A window in the porch, next to the front door, has a larger fixed central pane and smaller panes at the top. The front door, made of wood, does not have any detail. Air conditioning units are located at the east and west sides of the house. As is normally the case with farmhouses in general and of ranch houses in particular, this house is very simple and unpretentious. The house is in very good condition.

**Eligibility assessment**

The ranch house was the preferred style for residential subdivisions springing up in urban areas of the valley in the 1950s. Its simplicity and horizontal emphasis made it a well suited style for houses in rural subdivisions as well, and it is common to find this style in the rural zones southwest of the Phoenix Metro area. It is unusual however, to find ranch houses, which were normally constructed as elements within larger tracts, as isolated occurrences, and associated with agricultural fields. In addition, the typical farmhouse in this area is associated with farm-related outbuildings such as barns or equipment sheds, and situated amid a group of trees. In contrast, the Rich house has a single nearby shed, and, as noted above, the trees surrounding it were removed. This house, built during what has been defined as “the agricultural era” in the development of the Salt River valley (Brodbeck 2005), is not consistent with the local rural landscape at the time. Thus, it is not representative of agricultural trends associated with that era, and therefore not significant under Criterion A of the NRHP.

Research conducted regarding ownership of this property does not suggest that the house is associated with significant persons. Therefore, the house does not appear to be significant under Criterion B of the NRHP.

Owner/s	Date
Williams, John M. Jr. and June S.	1976 – present
Agnew, P. L. and Martha H.	1972 – 1976
Rich, Jesse C. and Iva E.	1946 – 1972
Cooper, Dan	before 1946

The building is in very good condition, but it lacks architectural distinction in terms of design, materials or craftsmanship. In addition, it is a ranch house, which, as previously stated, is not within the normal setting for ranch houses, that of a residential subdivision. Therefore, the house is not significant under Criterion C of the NRHP.

In sum, the Rich house is recommended as not eligible for the NRHP due to a general lack of historical and architectural significance. Although the setting has retained its rural character and the house appears to be structurally sound, it fails to convey the character of a historical farm house in the context of the agricultural development of the Salt River valley.



**Figure 2. Rich farmhouse. The site over time**

Because land subdivision and ownership change over time, the site refers to the area where the house is located, although it has been, and still is, associated with surrounding agricultural fields.

**Figure 3. Rich farmhouse. Site and setting as they look today**



□ current parcel



- road
- canal
- site
- fence
- building/structure
- agricultural field
- tree

**Figure 4. Rich farmhouse**



**Figure 5.**  
Rich farmhouse  
looking northeast  
looking north  
looking northwest

## FARMHOUSE AT 7316 W LOWER BUCKEYE ROAD

Address	7316 W Lower Buckeye Rd.
Location	E1/2 of the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 13, Township 1 N, Range 1 E
Landform	alluvial terrace on the north side of the Salt River
Elevation	1,010 ft
Dimensions	490 ft by 1300 ft (14.62 acres)
Land jurisdiction	private
UTM coordinates	386909 m E, 3698696 m N
USGS map	Fowler, Arizona
Property type	farmhouse
Built in	1959

### Description

The farmhouse at 7316 W Lower Buckeye Rd., depicted on Figures 6 – 10, is located in the Fowler area, north of the Salt River. The property is within the City of Phoenix limits, although the area had not been incorporated when the property was built. The house is located on the northwest corner of Lower Buckeye Rd. and Durango St., on a subdivided 15-acre parcel. The house occupies the SE corner of the 490 by 1300 feet elongated parcel.

Although some agricultural fields remain in the surrounding area, changes that have occurred since the house was built have considerably altered the rural character of the area (refer to Figure 7). Newer high-density subdivisions have appeared north and south of Lower Buckeye Rd.; a Wal-Mart store occupies the SW corner of Lower Buckeye and 75<sup>th</sup> Ave.; a house to the west, and a school to the east of the house, are of recent construction.

The property is separated from Lower Buckeye Rd. by an open ditch. An irrigation canal east of the property, as well as mature trees close to the southern end of it, separate the property from Durango Rd. The property is fenced.

According to Maricopa County assessor's records the house was built in 1959. Historic aerial photographs corroborate that no other building occupied the same spot before that date. Nevertheless, historic aerial photographs reveal that the house either has been greatly altered, or a new house occupies the site of the one built in 1959. For that reason, the house cannot be definitively associated with a specific owner. The fact that the house appears, because of its architecture, to have been built even before 1959, suggests that this building was either moved, or perhaps that it could have been built with salvaged materials. Building records for this house are not available, and the current owner of the property could not be contacted. A sequence of historic aerial photographs shows the changes the site went through before it acquired its current characteristics (refer to Figure 6). It appears that there were outbuildings—other than the one mentioned below—associated with the earlier building on this site. Corrals or pens were always present on this property. The current house does not appear in aerial photographs until sometime in the 1980s.

The house is set back approximately sixty feet from the property line. To the southwest of the house there is a shed made of wood panels and corrugated metal. The area behind the house, to the east of the parcel, is occupied by pig pens in extremely poor condition; some of them have metal panels as roofing. Old vehicles occupy the area between the house and the pens. Some areas of the parcel are overgrown with weedy vegetation. The rest of the parcel is vacant. It is not clear whether the building is currently used as

a residence, but it appears that originally it had a residential use, and it was associated with agricultural lands surrounding it (refer to Figure 8).

The building is a one story transitional ranch house built on a concrete slab foundation. The house, facing south, is a compact, boxlike building, with an L-shaped floor plan. There is a wood columned porch over the entry, at the SE corner of the house. The walls are made of face golden brick; some areas are partially painted. The wall at the entrance shows signs of alterations. The window sills, also of face golden brick, constitute the only detail of the brick walls. A hip roof, covered with asphalt shingles, has a wing to adapt to the L-shaped plan, and extends over the entry to create the porch. The house has different sizes of metal casement windows with small glass panes. The front door, made of wood, does not have any detail. An air conditioning unit is located at the west side of the house. The house is in average condition. It is very simple and unpretentious. Given the condition of the building, it could have been built of salvaged materials (refer to Figures 9 and 10).

### Eligibility assessment

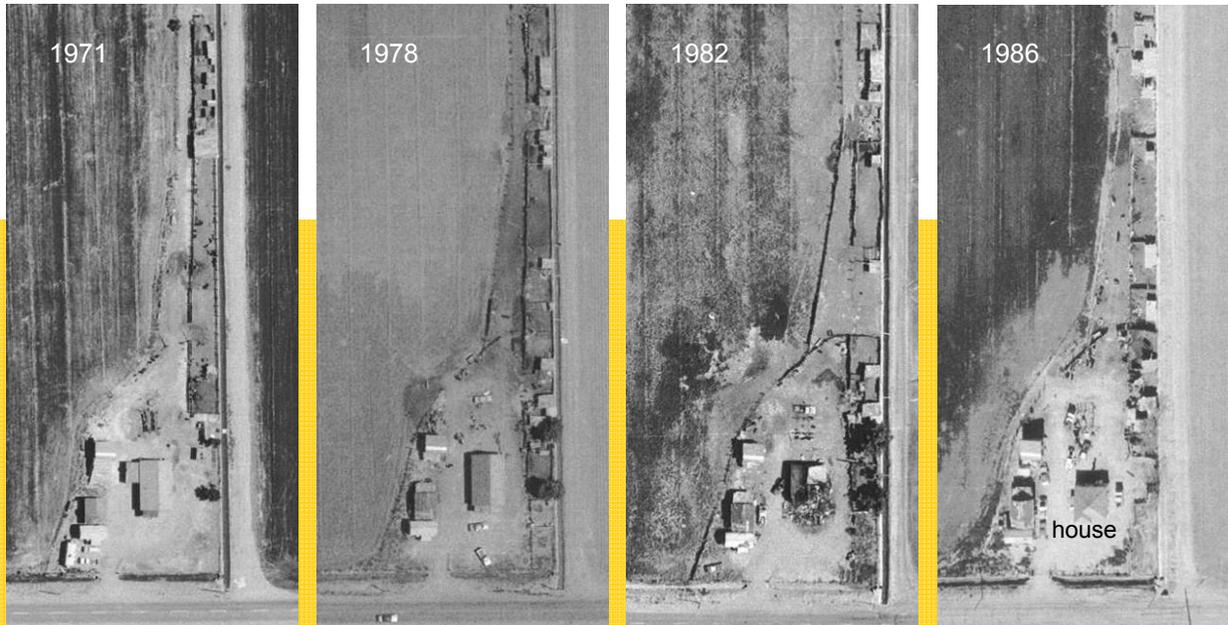
The property is consistent with a rural landscape and could be associated with the rural agricultural development of the Salt River valley. As noted, however, this setting has been altered substantially and has lost much of the rural character it had in the 1950s. Thus, even if this house dated to the 1950s, it can no longer be considered an element within a rural agricultural landscape. Therefore, the house is not significant under Criterion A of the NRHP even as a contributing component.

Research conducted regarding ownership of this property does not suggest that the house is associated with significant persons. Charles A. Carson was one of the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce directors in 1942 (Luckingham 1989). There is no information on whether C. A. Carson and Charles A. Carson are the same person. In any case, the building at 7316 W. Lower Buckeye Rd. was not built during Carson's land ownership. Therefore, the house is not significant under Criterion B of the NRHP.

Owner/s	Date
Landrum, Barbara E. and Vicki L.	2005
Landrum, Jack and Levettes	1970 – 2005
Khan, Anayattula	1962 – 1970
Valenzuela, Frank and Modesta	1955 – 1962
Carson, C. A. and Phyllis	before 1955

The building is in average condition, but it lacks architectural distinction in terms of design, materials or craftsmanship. The building is not unique, nor representative of building trends in the 1950s. As previously explained, the style and materials and elements employed—such as the windows, suggest that the house could be older than its supposed construction date, although it may have been moved to or rebuilt at its current location in the 1980s. In any case, there is nothing to suggest the house is significant under Criterion C of the NRHP.

In sum, the farmhouse at 7316 W Lower Buckeye Rd. is recommended as not eligible to the NRHP due to a general lack of historical and architectural significance. In addition, the setting has been substantially altered and has lost its rural character. Furthermore, the current building does not appear to be the one built in 1959; the current house as described does not appear in aerial photographs until sometime in the 1980s.



**Figure 6. Farmhouse at 7316 W Lower Buckeye Rd. The site over time**  
 These aerial photographs show the great alteration or either replacement of the original building in this site.

**Figure 7. Farmhouse at 7316 W Lower Buckeye Rd. Site and setting as they look today**



□ current parcel



**Figure 8. Farmhouse at 7316 W Lower Buckeye Rd.**

- road
- canal
- site
- fence
- building/structure
- overgrown vegetation
- tree

Figure 9. Farmhouse at  
7316 W Lower Buckeye Rd.  
looking northeast  
looking north  
looking northwest



Figure 10. Farmhouse at  
7316 W Lower Buckeye Rd.  
concrete canal along Durango St.  
open ditch along Lower Buckeye Rd.  
machinery shed

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