

Second & McKinley

Ninety-four years of one Phoenix corner, read from 39 county aerial flights.



1930

FLOWN JAN 1930

In 1930, every parcel on these blocks holds a house. By early 1969, the houses on the northwest corner of 2nd Avenue and McKinley Street are gone, and for the next 55 years the county's cameras record the same thing there: dirt, a few palms, sometimes parked cars.



2024

FLOWN SEP-OCT 2024

In the fall 2024 flight, foundations appear. That lot, outlined in yellow, is now Residences on 2nd: six townhomes, and the first houses on the corner since the 1960s.

Twelve flights, one intersection

Each frame is the same patch of ground, cropped from Maricopa County's historical aerials. North is up. The yellow box marks the corner lot.



1930 Houses on every lot



1949 Postwar, still intact



1959 First parking toward Central



1969 The corner is cleared



1976 Offices and parking arrive



1979 Office building, SW corner



1991 Little changes



2004 Still empty



2012 SW corner cleared



2019 The McKinley under way



2023 Saiya rising



2024 Foundations on the corner

Each corner took a different route to the same place

Northwest

Bungalows until the 1960s. By 1976 a courtyard office building covers most of the block. It comes down in 2019 for The McKinley, 108 apartments completed in 2020. The corner lot between that building and 2nd Avenue stays empty the whole time.

Northeast

Bungalows, then surface parking from the 1970s on, with a pair of small office buildings near McKinley. Cleared by 2022 for Saiya, a 23-story tower with 389 units.

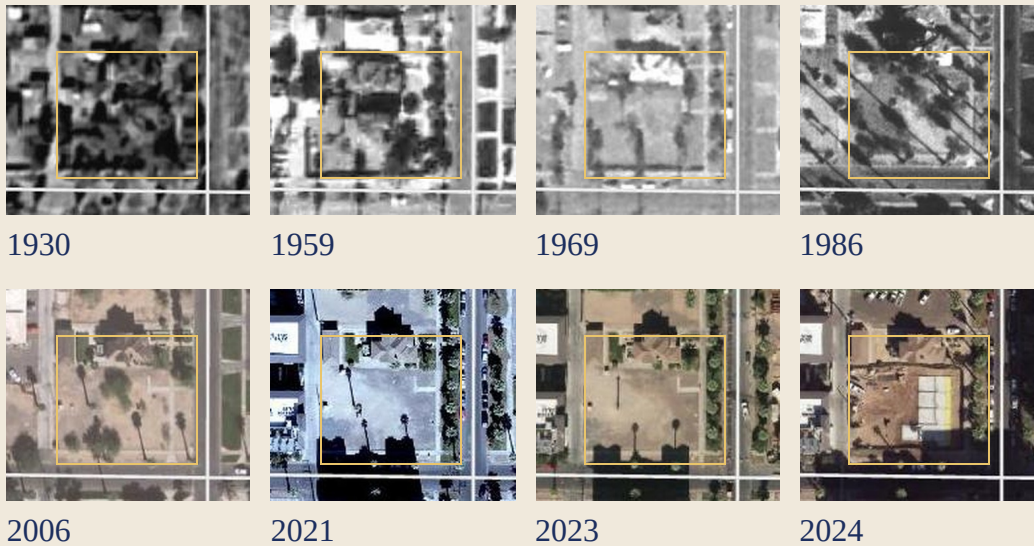
Southwest

Bungalows, then open ground by 1976 and a square office building by 1979. Cleared in 2012; by the 2013 flight a four-story apartment building has replaced it.

Southeast

The slowest to change. Apartments and offices fill in over decades, a few older houses near McKinley are still standing in 2024, and a new mid-rise rises on the old parking lot in 2023–24.

THE CORNER LOT, UP CLOSE



The corner started as homes on a residential street, spent two generations as leftover space between offices and parking, and is homes again.

What one corner teaches about infill

Empty lots have a backstory

A vacant parcel in a century-old neighborhood is rarely an accident. In Roosevelt, the Roosevelt Action Association traces the 1960s decline to a proposed freeway route that made banks hesitant to lend, which pushed families north. Lending, zoning and parking demand all left marks on this corner.

Infill is often re-fill

The new homes here are going back onto ground that held homes for decades, on blocks platted between 1893 and 1930 for walking to a streetcar. That history is part of what a buyer is getting.

Context moves fast

Between the 2019 and 2024 flights, this corner went from facing parking lots to facing a 23-story tower. Buyers deserve to understand what is planned around a home, not just what is standing there today.

Protection came late

The Roosevelt Historic District joined the National Register in 1983, and the city added historic preservation overlay zoning in 1986, well after this corner was cleared.

TRY IT YOURSELF

Every image here comes from Maricopa County's free Historical Aerial Photography viewer at gis.maricopa.gov. Search an address, open the layer list, and switch between flights back to 1930. It is one of the best tools for understanding a neighborhood before you buy, build, or list in it.

SOURCES

- Maricopa County GIS, Historical Aerial Photography, flights Jan 1930 through Sep–Oct 2024
- Roosevelt Action Association, rooseveltneighborhood.org/history
- HistoricPhoenix.com, Roosevelt Historic District history
- Downtown Phoenix Inc. development profiles: The McKinley, Saiya, Residences on 2nd

NOTES

- Years are the year each flight ended. Demolition timing is bracketed by flight dates.
- Building uses from the 1970s to 2000s are read from the imagery and described generally.
- Corner outline is approximate.

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