

2023

Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission
Plans Review Subcommittee (PRS)

LEGAL ACTION REPORT/Minutes

Thursday, August 10, 2023

Pursuant to safe practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person meetings are cancelled until further notice. This meeting was held virtually to allow for healthy practices and social distancing. The meeting was accessible at provided link to allow for participating virtually and/or calling in.

Note: A recording of the entire meeting (audio/video) can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUfRGd7RxAUv6rMbRNEurjg1iY8N4ZALR>

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 1:02 P.M., and per roll call, a quorum was established.

Commissioners Present: Teresita Majewski (Chair), Carol Griffith, Joel Ireland, Savannah McDonald (left the meeting at 3:00 P.M.)

Commissioners Excused/Joined Late: Jan Mulder

Applicants/Public Present: John Burr (chair, Armory Park Historic Zone Advisory Board [APHZAB]), Jannie Cox (Rio Nuevo), Lisa Falk (Arizona State Museum), Axel Golden (Cuadro Design), Chris Stebe (Norris Design), Bob Vint (Vint & Associates Architects)

Staff Present: Jodie Brown and Michael Taku (both Planning and Development Services)

2. Approval of the Legal Action Report/Minutes for the Meeting of July 25, 2023

This item postponed until August 10, 2023, meeting.

3. Historic Preservation Zone Review Cases

UDC Section 5.8/TSM 9-02.0.0/Historic District Design Guidelines/Revised Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines

3a. SD-0523-00057, 337 N Court

Remodel of the west façade of the house.
Full Review/El Presidio Historic Preservation Zone
Contributing Resource/Rehabilitation Standards

Staff Brown provided background on the project. The El Presidio Historic Zone Advisory Board (EPHZAB) heard the case on June 22, 2023, and approved the case as presented. The advisory board made a second motion to install a gutter above the rear door and clean up the electrical on the south façade.

Axel Golden presented the project. The house is made of molded concrete block. The middle roof front porch entry is railroad style – a defining characteristic. The house is set back from the street. The goal of the project is to remodel the kitchen, and to do this, changes will only be made to the rear façade. Stucco will remain the same, as will the footprint of the building. There will be some changes to windows and a door. The roof line will not change. The water heater closet will remain in the same position. This is more of a preservation project. The windows will be new but will match existing – wood double hung.

Commissioner McDonald asked about the floor plan, and Mr. Golden showed it. Staff Brown also noted, based on her review of the Sanborn maps for the property, that in 1909 there was no porch, from 1919 to 1949 there was an open rear porch, and that after 1949 the porch was enclosed. Commissioner McDonald pointed out that he is missing a demolition plan for the features to be removed and a plan for the new porch. Mr. Golden noted that he has those plans, but they were not included in materials provided to PRS; he then showed them. Commissioner Griffith asked him to consider reusing some of the existing windows. Mr. Golden said he would discuss this with the owner. Staff Brown pointed out that the rear porch was enclosed after the period of significance. Nothing was there in 1909.

Commissioner Ireland noted that he appreciated the information on the Sanborn history of the porch. He had a question about the wood frame rear door. Do we have an idea of what it will look like? Commissioner McDonald clarified his question – will the door be just a flat, flush panel or will there be a two- or three-panel door with more visual interest than a flat slab? More detail is preferred. Commissioner Ireland also asked if the door will have a security gate, and Mr. Golden said it would not. Chair Majewski mentioned that the advisory board made a motion to install a gutter above the rear door. Discussion was held. Action was taken.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner McDonald to recommend approval of the project as presented, including: (a) install a gutter on the rear porch; (b) style of the rear door to have at least one panel on the replacement door; (c) that the water heater be shown and included on the final proposed plan, and (d) that electrical and plumbing on the exterior of the south elevation be cleaned up.

Commissioner Ireland seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of 4-0. (Commissioner Mulder absent)

Staff Brown explained the next steps.

3b. SD-0523-00052, 350 N Main

Construction of a rear addition to the main house.
Full Review/El Presidio Historic Preservation Zone
Non-Contributing Resource/Rehabilitation Standards

Staff Brown provided background. The EPHZAB heard this case on June 22, 2023, and they recommended it for approval with the caveat that any additions that support the equipment will not be visible from the street. Bob Vint presented the project. He is returning on a project that PRS has reviewed before. Instead of completing that project at the present time, the owners Joe and Peggy Wilder want to add a room for their books (now that they have retired from the University of Arizona). The addition would be a combination library/laundry. The home is a noncontributor to the El Presidio Historic Zone. The original home was built in 1993, and a little porch enclosure was added 25 years ago (the latter by Mr. Vint). The Wilders are still planning to build the guesthouse that is the subject of the original project but took a hiatus in having the drawings completed when they shifted direction. Staff Brown assured Mr. Vint that if he originally requests an extension for the previous project permit, then it will be extended for six months.

The plan for the library/laundry is to add a room on the very end of the existing house. The porch basically would be extended another 11 feet, and this single room would be added at the end. There is an existing garden wall made of adobe – a little alcove with a garden wall and an evaporative cooler hanging off the side of the building. They will just enclose that with a wall of books. Mr. Vint's addition from 1998 has a rectangular flat, parapet-type roof. He is proposing a hybrid roof here with a pitched parapet following the slope of the original house so the evaporative cooler can be concealed behind a parapet. There is a doorway into the existing house. They'll have a single window opposite the door, which is actually at the end of a hallway, so there would still be daylight. There would be a washer/dryer with linen storage on either side and a wall of books from floor to ceiling on the west wall. The existing adobe wall that wraps around is 10 inches thick, and it has been out in the weather for 30 years. So rather than use it as a support, they are proposing to come inside it with a steel stud-frame wall that will carry the new roof of the proposed addition. It also gives 3.5 inches of insulation space as well as space for electrical conduit and outlets. It would have a plasterboard sheet-rock finish; they would not rely on the adobe wall for structure. It's basically there as an enclosure.

Mr. Vint then showed the floor plan and section. There would be a simple low-slope roof behind a parapet. He pointed out the evaporative cooler, cabinets around the laundry, and a single high window proposed above that. He discussed the elevations, with a sloped wall on the east, facing the backyard, with a level wall on the north, aligned with the main house. Galvanized ribbing siding would be used, to match the house. This finish would turn the corner on the east, and it is tall enough that would provide the required guardrail for worker safety for someone maintaining the cooler on the roof. The top of the adobe wall would be

coped with sheet-metal flashing to protect the top of the wall from rain. The details of the windows on the addition, which would follow the same pattern of windows as the 1993 house on the south. Blue-painted bead-board siding (used on existing house) would be installed on the south elevation of the addition.

Commissioner McDonald asked if the existing little low wall is to be maintained. Mr. Vint said yes, the one in the south will stay but the little ones have to be removed because they would be in the room. They plan to use some of the adobe blocks from the small walls to repair the base of the wall where the cooler has been leaking. The remaining blocks will be kept on site for maintenance. They are all asphalt-stabilized adobe from Old Pueblo (Bob Barnes). Commissioner McDonald then asked if the brick paving also gets extended. Mr. Vint said yes, the patio would continue with the same brick paving that is already there. Commissioner Ireland ask about the location of the blue-painted bead-board, and Mr. Vint explained about the new installation, which would match the existing on other parts of the house. Discussion ensued about distinguishing the adobe portions from the frame portions – it might be possible to recess the bead board at the addition. Commissioner Griffith asked about mitigating water buildup on the roof. Mr. Vint said they will make sure that water is conducted away from the base of the wall, maybe using something like a “splash block.” He will address that in the next phase of construction drawings. Discussion was held. Action was taken.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner McDonald to recommend approval of the project as presented, with the following notes: (a) ensure that the equipment is not visible from the street; (b) that the bead board at the addition/enclosure is recessed a few inches from the face of the adobe; and (c) that there is a splash block at the bottom of the downspout.

Commissioner Ireland seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of 4-0. (Commissioner Mulder absent)

- 3c. Activate El Presidio, Multiple locations within the El Presidio HPA**
Installation of lighting, street art, plantings and site furnishings at various locations in El Presidio.
Courtesy Review/El Presidio Historic Preservation Zone
Contributing Resource/Rehabilitation Standards

Staff Brown provided background on the project. Today is a courtesy review, but the project, designed to “activate” certain areas in El Presidio, will come back for a full review. Armory Park in between the park and the Children’s Museum had a similar project where they painted the street and had some planters. The project being reviewed today is more extensive, with lights, planters, and probably murals and street painting.

Chris Stebe presented the project. There will be no physical improvements to structures – it is purely cosmetic in nature, except for a few parking spaces that

will be removed or have new treatments. Mr. Stebe noted that the project was planned for nine different areas in El Presidio, but now there are eight. Most are adjacent to Old Town Artisans, but some interact with Alameda. The neighborhood and a working group have been working on the project for several years, and they prefer geometric patterning and coloring that draws from the historic Pima County Courthouse dome. The areas were then described.

Commissioner Griffith asked if plantings will be in planters or will they be trees, planted in the ground. How will they be watered? Mr. Stebe said that watering would be a combination effort between the Downtown Tucson Partnership and the Tucson Museum of Art – getting staff to water. No city-owned water is available. Commissioner Griffith is concerned with maintenance and watering for planters. She asked about the possibility of using reclaimed water, and Mr. Steve said they are exploring that for the Tucson Museum of Art. Part of the project budget is to include three years of maintenance with agreements in place. Chair Majewski asked about sending this project for review by the commission's Historic Landscapes Subcommittee (HLS), as it is a streetscape. She is concerned about the plants being desert-appropriate. There is a lot here to review in 30 minutes. It will come back to PRS for a full review.

Staff Brown noted that EPHZAB will also review the project. The applicant is still developing the plans. Chair Majewski asked Staff Brown if any character-defining features of the landscape are being impacted. Commissioner Ireland noted that his questions have already been raised. Commissioner McDonald agreed that the project should go through HLS. She also asked for more clarity on the corner bump outs. Mr. Stebe explained using the example of Court and Franklin. There are flexible bollards that go around these corners with treatments on the asphalt by the bollards. He clarified that there are no physical improvements like curbing access or ramps. Chris Stebe said no, and Commissioner McDonald said she was disappointed that needed physical improvements would not be made. Mr. Stebe explained that funding for this project is coming from Rio Nuevo, and they are not the city. She then asked how long paint on the asphalt would last, and he said since 2019 or pre-Pandemic. Commissioner McDonald asked about the purpose of the bump out – to slow traffic for safety reasons? Mr. Stebe said the purpose was not necessarily traffic calming but almost as a wayfinding element and more pedestrian oriented, pedestrian friendly. It's also planned for elsewhere in the area. Commissioner McDonald said she imagines that there will be new light-pole fixtures and signage. Will we see that in a full review?

Mr. Stebe asked what aspects of the design would fall under our purview, so he can focus the information for the next review. Commissioner McDonald said we would want to see colors and site furniture, the fixtures, and the signage. Chair Majewski recommends we think about the overall impacts of these changes to the historic character of the neighborhood and to obtain feedback from HLS on the streetscape. She then asked about the schedule for the project, and he said ASAP. Mr. Stebe asked about which things we really want to see to make a decision about the impacts on the historic character of this district versus just being a temporary "improvement." Chair Majewski thanked them for their time and noted that PRS looks forward to their next presentation. No action was taken.

3d. Discovering Community in the Borderlands, 180-260 S Church Avenue

Installation of a sign on the northern kiosk in the walkway along the TCC complex.
Courtesy Review/Tucson Community Center Historic Landscape
Contributing Resource/Rehabilitation Standards

Staff Brown provided background information on the project. The review schedule for this project is due to deadlines of a grant requirement. Federal funding came from the Mellon Foundation and from the University of Arizona's Digital Borderlands Project from the University of Arizona Library. Review today is for a poster to be placed in the northern kiosk [pillar] on the walkway along the Tucson Convention Center complex. Lisa Falk presented the project. The poster will celebrate and provide the history of Asian Americans in Tucson. University of Arizona partners include the Arizona State Museum, the Center for Digital Humanities, and the Poetry Center. Community Partners include the Tucson Chinese Cultural Center, Dunbar Pavilion, Mission Garden, Borderlands Theatre, and the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Department of Language and Culture.

The overall project of which this poster is a part is for augmented reality experiences. A QR code is assigned, it is scanned, and that triggers the experience. The Dunbar Pavilion experience is already installed. The Chinese Cultural Center also has one. They worked with the city, and there is one installed at Bonita Park, which is a little different, because it includes multiple signs. Most are just one sign.

The poster she is presenting on today looks at materials that came out of the Tucson Urban Renewal Archaeological Project. The collections are at the Arizona State Museum and at Special Collections at the University of Arizona Library, and both sources were used to create the experience. The QR code shown is not yet functional – this is just a sample. Unlike the other signs, they have added a map to show people the site being discussed. The experience also includes a video produced by the Chinese Cultural Center telling about the history of the site and the importance of the materials. Historic photos and documents introduce the link between families in Tucson and families in China. You can kind of manipulate the artifacts from the collection and a photo wall with voiceover and a discussion of the historical documents found – identification cards and other pictures from the area. Some letters in Chinese were also translated.

The installation only includes putting up a sign on the northern pillar on the walkway. This is the closest pillar to where the materials originated. Ms. Helen Erickson suggested this location, which would not impact the historic designation of the convention center landscape. They are working with sign expert Jude Cook. Ms. Falk discussed several ways Mr. Cook said are possible to mount the digital print and showed other examples. Their funding has to be spent for the subject sign very soon, so that is why the urgency of this courtesy review. They'll be doing a community launch of all the completed sites on August 30. All signs were designed with community input.

Chair Majewski commented that the more modern QR technology will be interesting to a lot of younger people used to this technology and also to older people who are becoming accustomed to QR codes. Commissioner McDonald echoed these comments and noted that the graphics are fantastic. She thinks Ms. Falk is fighting against the curved surface where the poster will be mounted, but having Jude Cook on their team will help them make a good decision. Commissioner McDonald and Ms. Falk discussed the longevity of the installation, which is estimated to be two years. Commissioner Ireland had no additional questions. Commissioner Griffith thinks the QR technology is very good and recommends going with what their consultants think about mounting the poster. Chair Majewski wished them the best of luck with their project.

Ms. Falk asked about next steps. Chair Majewski explained that the courtesy review summary will be posted as part of a legal action report for today's meeting (and later as part of approved minutes), and that Staff Brown can provide her with the information to access them. Because it's more of a temporary poster, no sign permit is required. Staff Brown did request, however, that once Ms. Falk and Mr. Cook figure out how to attach the poster, she would like to be informed of that decision. Staff Brown reassured Ms. Falk that she is "good to go." Chair Majewski wished her good luck with finalizing the project.

[Commissioner McDonald left the meeting at 3:00 P.M. A quorum was still in effect after her departure.]

4. Update on City Outreach to Property Owners in Historic Districts Regarding Potential Impacts of Code Changes

Chair Majewski shared Commissioner McDonald's comments on the draft materials Staff Brown had previously provided to PRS members prior to the meeting. Commissioner McDonald has reviewed Staff Brown's property owners' cover letter and felt it was very good. Staff Brown explained that she had added a question about archaeology that PRS had asked for and also added the State Historic Preservation Offices main phone line and their website, plus the website for the full Secretary of Interior's Standards. The cover letter was then discussed, and Chair Majewski had a few questions. She asked Staff Brown to send her a Word version of the letter, and then she would use track changes for her suggested edits. Chair Majewski asked Commissioners Griffith and Ireland if they had comments. Commissioner Ireland suggested defining what a noncontributor is, and that was added. Chair Majewski also suggested adding the link for the City's Historic Preservation Office. She also requested that when finalized, Staff Brown provide her with the final materials when prepared so that she can provide them to commissioners.

5. Task Force on Inclusivity Report Recommendations

4a. Discussion on Best Practices for Naming of City- and County-Owned Physical Assets

No report was given.

6. Current Issues for Information/Discussion

6a. Minor Reviews

Staff Taku reported on four recent on-site minor reviews: 911 N. 6th Avenue (West University) for solar panels (move some of the panels out of view if it doesn't cause them to lose power; 740 E. Speedway (West University) First Christian Church for site wall and gates; 707 E. Speedway (West University) for demolition of a storage unit behind the property (not listed as a contributor, in very poor condition with adobe collapsing, recommended demolition); 227 S. 5th Avenue (Armory Park) for fence and three gates.

Staff Taku will query PRS members for availability for three minor reviews: 220 E. Speedway for doors and windows; 219 E. 2nd Street for solar panels; and 804 S. 6th Avenue for a wrought iron fence and gate.

6b. Appeals

Staff Taku noted that there are no current appeals.

6c. Zoning Violations

Staff Taku noted that there are ongoing and pending cases being worked on for compliance and/or in the review process, and that staff are working with their zoning violation code enforcement liaison. An active zoning violation case at 711-713 E. 5th Street is currently going through The Court with Code Enforcement Division and West University continued the review. It will be coming to PRS soon.

6d. Review Process Issues

Staff Brown noted that hybrid meetings may be coming soon, as Fort Lowell has already gone back to this format.

7. Summary of Public Comments (Information Only)

No public comments were received by the posted deadline.

8. Future Agenda Items for Upcoming Meetings

The next scheduled meeting is August 24, 2023. Staff Brown noted that potential cases included an Infill Incentive District case and one for a fence in Fort Lowell.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 P.M.