



Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission
Historic Landscapes Subcommittee
Legal Action Report

March 28, 2024

The Historic Landscapes Subcommittee of the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission conducted a meeting on Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. hybrid via Zoom and at Pima Community College, Downtown Campus, Advanced Manufacturing Building, M369 Conference Room, 1255 N. Queen Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85709

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

Meeting was called to order by Chair Grede at 10:00 a.m. Those present and absent were:

Members Present:

Steve Grede, Chair
Geoffrey Ellwand (arrived 10:06 a.m.)
Helen Erickson
J. J. Lamb
Jan Mulder

Members Absent:

Guests:

Jodie Brown, City of Tucson Historic Preservation Officer
Jasmine Chan, City of Tucson Parks & Recreation
Jennifer Patton, Wilder Landscape Architects
Corky Poster; Poster, Mirto, McDonald Architects
Drew Cook; Poster, Mirto, McDonald Architects

2. Approval of Historic Landscapes Subcommittee LAR/Minutes from Meeting of: 2-22-2024

Commissioner Mulder moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of 2-22-2024. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Erickson and passed by a roll call vote of 4-0 (Commissioner Ellwand had not yet joined the meeting).

3. Review Cases (Discussion/Action)

a. City of Tucson Shared Spaces: Parklets + Streateries in Historic Districts

Commissioners Erickson and Mulder reviewed the document and shared items to be considered when projects are in or adjacent to historic districts:

- Reversibility of introduced structures or features
- Permanent installations of individual features requiring additional review
- Sunset dates for required review
- Removal of installations no longer in use
- Obstructed views to historic resources
- Compatibility of materials and installations with historic character
- Overall impact on the streetscape
- Impact on pedestrian passageway
- Maintenance by responsible entity
- Compatible scale of installation

As the report is still in draft form. Ms. Brown will reach out to DTM with HLS concerns.

Commissioner Erickson moved that she and Commissioner Mulder will communicate HLS role and concerns about City of Tucson Shared Spaces: Parklets + Streateries in Historic Districts with COT staff.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mulder and passed by a roll call vote of 5-0.

b. Commissary Building Rehabilitation. The address is 5479 E. Fort Lowell

Ms. Chan introduced the Historic Fort Lowell project. Mr. Poster and Mr. Cook presented landscape proposals for the Adkins Parking Lot, Commissary, and Donaldson House.

Adkins Parking Lot:

- Existing Adkins parking plan to expand from 6 parking spaces and 2 ADA to 33 parking spaces and 4 ADA spaces. The surface of the parking lot would remain compacted decomposed granite, except where the ADA spaces require concrete.
- Due to archeology on site there will be no landscape work requiring excavation, even two inches below the surface. Improvements will be additive.
- The plan delineates the location of a row/allée of trees that outlined the western boundary of the parade grounds. Commissioner Grede suggested plantings to represent the historic cottonwood trees that were a defining

feature of the military fort. Adjustments to the pathway would strengthen the geometry of the historic parade grounds. Commissioner Erickson suggested keeping the parade ground area as clear of intrusions as possible.

Commissary:

- Easement to northwest property to be maintained
- Proposed speed table for traffic calming
- Three 20-minute parking spaces and a delivery space
- New walking path to south to extend the Fort Lowell Neighborhood path. New walking path on the northeast to connect to special events parking lot.
- All significant vegetation to be retained except a couple mesquite trees that have died. Existing stone planter to remain and replacement native mesquite proposed. NPPO will document native vegetation to be retained in place or removed from site.
- Plant palette for additional plantings to be native and on Historic Fort Lowell planting list.
- The courtyard will incorporate smaller and shorter vegetation in keeping with the historic character. The front may have some taller plantings near the building.
- Existing dirt pathways/wish ways to be preserved. These will be built up with stabilized decomposed granite. Patio spaces to be paved with permeable pavement. Steel grates to provide draining under walkways.
- Some casual seating is proposed.
- Historic well will be retained but will be secured to avoid accidents.
- Concept for floating steel grates with the historic cellar as a patio space for event rental is appropriate. Premium trees would be preserved. There could be lighting below. The north wall can be viewed. (This is an alternative bid.)

Donaldson House:

- Stables are to be preserved and Donaldson House is to be restored.
- Preventing existing site and park site drainage from impacting the historic adobe structure is the primary concern. Berms will be introduced to slow and encourage water infiltration before it impacts the site.
- Fewer plantings will be retained against the house to protect the adobe. Plantings will require limited irrigation. Desert willow is a suggestion to replace the mesquite tree removed from the main entry. HLS members suggested investigating the possibility of a tree species that shares more characteristics with the native mesquite.
- Proposed hardscape at the back of house will respect the original form and locations of deteriorated brick work.
- Volunteer plant material now on site will be evaluated, and some will be retained.

Commissioner Grede commended the team for their thoughtful preliminary design.

4. **Current Issues for Information (Discussion/Action)**

c. Reid Park Masterplan

Nothing to report at this time.

d. Armory Park Masterplan

Nothing to report at this time.

e. Armory Park Masterplan – Children’s Museum Block

Nothing to report at this time.

f. Drachman Motels - Tucson Inn, El Rancho Motor Hotel, and Frontier Motel, Miracle Mile District

Commissioner Erickson mentioned the *Arizona Daily Star* op ed article written by Ken Scoville. The article called attention to the insecure status of the motels.

g. Issues for collaboration between Transportation Subcommittee and Historic Landscapes Subcommittee

Commissioner Lamb reported that the Transportation Subcommittee wants to pursue this topic for the next meeting.

h. Historic Landscape Subcommittee’s possible role in researching, nominating, and reviewing rural and cultural landscapes.

Commissioner Erickson discussed the Colossal Road project and the hopes that an alternative transportation route could be designed. This will be added to a future agenda.

i. Follow-up on Villa Catalina replacement of turf with artificial turf.

Commissioner Grede will follow up with Rachelle Hornby.

5. **Future Agenda Items for Upcoming Meetings**

- The next meeting is scheduled for April 25 at 10:00 a.m. Future meetings will be on the 4th Thursday of the month on a regular basis.

6. **Call to the Audience (Information Only)**

No comments were received by the posted deadline.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.