

City of Prescott
Prescott Preservation Commission



July 14, 2023 | 9:00 AM
201 N. Montezuma Street
Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mirco called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

2. ROLL CALL

Members:

Michael Mirco, Chairman
Mike King, Vice-Chairman, Absent
Diane Travis
James McCarver
Rob Johnson
Richard Sprain
Mary Ann Suttles, Absent

Staff:

Kaylee Nunez, Historic Preservation Specialist
George Worley, Planning Manager
Chelsea Walton, Interim Community Development Director
Sarah Hilton, Recording Secretary

City Leadership:

Mayor, Phil Goode
Councilman, Eric Moore, Liaison
Councilmember, Cathey Rusing
Councilwoman, Connie Cantelme

3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

- A. Approval of the May 12, 2023 Prescott Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER TRAVIS TO APPROVE THE MAY 12, 2023 PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES; SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SPRAIN: (5 - 0)

- B. Presentation and Discussion for a Study Session Review of Proposed Project HP23-006: Request Review and Input on Proposal for Demolition of an Existing Building & Construction of a 55-Room, 5-Story Boutique Hotel (Prescott Plaza Hotel). Location: 136, 138 & 140 S. Montezuma Street, APN 109-02-014A. Zoning: DTB, Historic Preservation District #1, Courthouse Plaza. Applicant & Owner: Jim Griset. Architect: Rimas Rudys.

This item was for discussion only. No formal action was taken.

Historic Preservation specialist Kaylee Nunez presented a history of the site including historic renderings. Sanborn Fire Maps indicate that it was a saloon and gambling hall when it was built after The Great Fire of 1900. Since the mid-twentieth century, the building has housed restaurants and retail shops. It now houses two retail shops and one art gallery.

Ms. Nunez stated that the building is not on the National Register of Historic Places but would be eligible for National Register nomination.

Ms. Nunez discussed key concerns from when the project was presented to the Prescott Preservation Commission in March of 2022. The public and Commission largely expressed opposition. The design was modified as a result.

The current request is as follows:

- Demolish existing building.
- Construct five-story boutique hotel with fifty-five guest rooms, three meeting rooms, and a rooftop terrace on the third floor.
- Rear of hotel (Whiskey Row Alley) will feature a hotel mercantile shop as well as secondary entrance.
- Building height: Forty-eight feet to top of fifth floor, fifty-three feet to top of elevator overrun.
- Use granite, sandstone, & brick veneer for exterior finishes.
- Canvas awnings & black wrought iron railings on balconies.
- Historic detailing with cornices, friezes, and lintels.

Ms. Nunez presented a rendering of the Whiskey Row Streetscape elevation and spoke about the height of other buildings in the area.

Ms. Nunez then discussed her analysis based on five principal elements of the Prescott Historic Preservation Master Plan:

- Demolition:

Meets criteria as current building is noncontributor to NR; however, current building architecturally compatible with Whiskey Row.

- Architectural Characteristics (Materials & Details):

Largely meets criteria; however, sandstone not present on other buildings on Whiskey Row.

- Windows and Doors:

Largely meets criteria, except for fourth & fifth floor front façade windows and front door.

- Siting:

Largely meets criteria; step-back on third floor atypical, however. Buildings in district have a zero setback for entire height.

- Scale, Massing, & Building Size:

Does not meet criteria. Top point of building is fifty-three feet. There are no District guidelines beyond three stories. Proposed building is out of scale and massing with others on Whiskey Row.

Ms. Nunez stated that although they are compatible in style, the architectural features will appear to be large in comparison with the intimate scale of Whiskey Row. She also pointed out that the District guidelines have a list of threats to character. Among those is the demolition of historic resources to make way for larger commercial and business uses. This could degrade the scale of the district and result in loss of historic resources.

Ms. Nunez then discussed the height to width ratios of the other buildings in the area and the proposed hotel.

Ms. Nunez explained that she sent the proposal to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), who performed a complimentary analysis. The project was reviewed against three of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. It met two of the three standards. The recommendation from SHPO was to consider matching heights of extant adjacent horizontal features & break façade into smaller elements consistent with scale of surrounding buildings.

Ms. Nunez discussed public input on the project. Twelve hundred eighteen notices were mailed on June twenty-sixth to all properties within one-half mile of the Courthouse. An article was published in the Courier on July seventh. She received forty-three responses with forty-two opposed and one in support.

Property owner and applicant Jim Griset presented an overview of the proposed hotel. He stated that they have redesigned the hotel and made every effort to respect the Historic Preservation Master Plan. The redesign includes the following modifications:

- Eliminated the sixth floor rooftop terrace
- Upper floors are finished with brick veneer
- Guest room ceiling heights have been reduced from nine feet to eight feet.
- The glass parapet at the third floor wine bar terrace has been replaced with metal balcony railing as well as the guest room balconies facing the plaza
- Awnings are a color compatible with Whiskey Row
- Lower level windows will be all wood construction
- Reduced the height of hotel from 63 feet to 47.8 feet

Mr. Griset stated that the rear wall and the floor are the only areas that are original to the building. The upper floors as well as the back of the building will be brick veneers. He then made a statement about his vision for the hotel.

Chairman Michael Mirco asked if there was a study done on the ground beneath the site.

Mr. Griset stated that there have been soils tests done and that they will do additional testing once demolished.

Chairman Mirco asked what impact excavation will have on the adjacent buildings if there is granite.

Mr. Griset stated that they will not be excavating straight down on the property line. They will be coming in from a distance to minimize impact. Where the elevators and stairwells will be, they will be closer to the property line. He stated that they will take precautions to protect adjacent properties.

Chairman Mirco asked what street they will use to transport debris out of the area.

Mr. Griset replied that they will have to go down the alley.

Chairman Mirco asked how long the project will take.

Mr. Griset stated that the construction time will be reduced due to modulars being used for the upper three floors. When shipped, the modules will be ready for guests. They will build the basement, lobby, and wine bar on site. He stated that the time to stack the upper part of the hotel is one week.

Chairman Mirco asked how long the basement and first floor would take to construct.

Mr. Griset replied about six months.

Commissioner Richard Sprain asked how they got the height of the building down.

Mr. Griset said they originally had interior ceiling heights of nine feet but they have been reduced to eight feet. They also were able to recess the ten inch structural members of the first floor modules into the basement.

Commissioner Sprain asked for confirmation that the roof would not be used.

Mr. Griset replied that it would not.

Twenty-seven members of the public shared comments, twenty-four in opposition, three in favor. Key concerns were as follows:

- Failure to adhere to local and/or national historic guidelines

- Belongs at alternate site
- Damage to adjacent buildings during construction
- Negative impacts on nearby business owners
- Negative impact on the area during construction
- Traffic issues
- Parking issues

Ms. Nunez stated that we are at a pivotal time for the Courthouse Plaza. She stated that she welcomes feedback on outreach. She stated that the commission is tasked with providing direct and substantive feedback at this time.

Commissioner McCarver stated that the Historic Preservation Plan lays out specific guidelines for new construction or remodels. He stated that there is not a precedent for buildings over three stories high. He is also concerned with the fact that setbacks are not allowed past the first floor. He believes that these precedents are important to preserve.

4. STAFF UPDATES

Ms. Nunez stated that they are working on the Historic Master Plan update. They will be starting outreach later this summer.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss Chairman Mirco adjourned the meeting at 10:41 A.M.



MICHAEL MIRCO, Chairman

ATTEST:



SARAH HILTON, Recording Secretary