



City of Prescott

Prescott Preservation Commission

July 22, 2025 | 11:00 AM
201 N Montezuma Street
Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sprain called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Richard Sprain, Chair
Diane Travis, Vice Chair
Rob Johnson, Member
James McCarver, Member (Excused)
Rick Kimery, Member (Excused)
Genelle Volhontseff, Member

3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

- A. **HP25-004:** A Request for Approval for Demolition of an Existing Building & Construction of a 4-Story, 47-Room Hotel (Prescott Plaza Hotel). Historic Preservation District: #1 Courthouse Plaza (National and Local Districts). Location: APN 109-02-014A, 136, 138, & 140 S. Montezuma Street. Zoning: DTB (Downtown Business). Owner/Applicant: Jim Griset; Architect: Stroh Architecture.

Kaylee Nunez Community Planner/Historic Preservation Specialist gave a presentation and provided information related to the proposal for HP25-004. She stated that this redesign was needed due to previous Prescott Preservation Commission denial in March of 2022 and July of 2023. She added that the new proposal includes a maximum building height of 48 feet to the top of the elevator overrun. Staff reviewed the proposal against chapter 8 of the Historic Preservation Master Plan (Courthouse Plaza District) and determined that the proposal largely meets the review criteria. Staff recommends to approve or deny HP25-004.

Applicant Doug Stroh (Stroh Architecture) stated that he has designed the hotel, and it meets all historic preservation criteria except for one. He shared a site plan, floor plan, and construction materials and emphasized that this has been designed to fit into the area but not be the focal point of Whiskey Row. Additionally, he added that there will be no street closures during demolition or construction and that he believes this building will be a good fit for the surrounding area.

Chair Sprain asked if the setback in the rear is to the property line or if it was setback 10 feet.

Mr. Stroh said it was to the property line.

Chair Sprain stated that the historic preservation regulation states there should be a 10-foot rear setback.

Ms. Nunez clarified that the Downtown Business District (DTB) does not have setback requirements.

Chair Sprain asked what the size of the front entrance was.

Mr. Stroh stated the windows have been setback and the entrance door is about 6 feet wide.

Chair Sprain asked if it would be less than 37 feet for all windows, doors, and glass.

Mr. Stroh said yes.

Chair Sprain asked if the parapets were 4 feet in height.

Mr. Stroh said there would not be anything on top of the roof.

Chair Sprain stated there is not a single balcony with a zero setback on Whiskey Row and is unsure if they would be permitted.

Mr. Stroh said there are no rules or guidelines against it.

Chair Sprain stated that there are no guidelines regarding the 4th floor open area either.

Mr. Stroh asked if he was referring to the railings along the upper patio.

Chair Sprain asked if they were just metal railings.

Ms. Nunez stated that the 4th floor and balconies are not addressed by the Historic Preservation guidelines, and they are considered a gray area.

Member Johnson asked if the windows are metal or wood framed.

Mr. Stroh said they are proposing vinyl clad window frames due to maintenance issues of wood framed windows.

Vice Chair expressed concerns about the front balconies and railings on the top floor and would like to see Juliette balconies and solid railings on the top patio.

Mr. Stroh stated the patio was designed to have visibility and the balcony is a positive aspect of the design.

Commissioner Volhontseff asked if the balconies are intended to be used by the occupants. Additionally, she would also like to see Juliette balconies.

Mr. Stroh asked if there was a difference between the current balconies or Juliette balconies. He believes that her concern is related to citizens throwing items from the balcony.

Commissioner Volhontseff said that was her concern and would like to know how the guidelines address these issues.

Mr. Stroh said if there is lawlessness that could happen anywhere.

Member of the public Mel Roop provided a list of issues needing to be explored. The list includes conflicting priorities, private property rights, options available to the applicant if denied, restricting hotel uses for the proposal to the second floor,

failure of the applicant to use professional design practices, and the pedestrian experience on Whiskey Row.

Member of the public Mike Korpall expressed his desire to see the Preservation Commission do the right thing with this proposal and stop this project.

Member of the public Steve Parker said that the Preservation Commission is here to preserve history. He does not believe that Whiskey Row will still be historic with the inclusion of this hotel.

Member of the public Edward Wolfe believes this proposal is an eye sore and is opposed to the proposal. Additionally, he does not believe the design is fitting for Whiskey Row and will be a detriment to the surrounding area.

Member of the public Sandy Griffis stated that Whiskey Row is a cornerstone of Prescott's legacy and believes the hotel is a respectful integration. She is in favor of the proposal.

Member of the public Bob Weaver expressed opposition to the proposal. He believes this will be a focal point on Whiskey Row and is going to be an eye sore. He would like to see this proposal be 100% in compliance with the historic preservation guidelines.

Member of the public Dave Seigel does not believe the Preservation Commission should approve this out of fear of a lawsuit. He believes this is an improper use of the Land Development Code and wants to see the applicant start over from the beginning with a new application.

Member of the public Ken Fidyk would like to see the Preservation Commission have all design issues addressed and this proposal to be 100% in compliance. He has concerns about the effect on surrounding buildings and would like to see an engineer verify that the demolition will not affect adjacent buildings.

Member Bruce Senkow believes that the hotel is a great addition to the City of Prescott and would like to see this approved.

Member of the public Bill Fields stated that the balconies are not on the owner's property and are located over public property. Additionally, he provided a handout with all of his concerns to the commissioners.

Member of the public Wendy Johnson believes that the balconies are a health and safety issue. She has concerns about adjacent buildings during construction affecting the integrity of Whiskey Row in its entirety and does not believe this proposal should be approved.

Member of the public Thomas Slaback is concerned that this proposal will ruin the views of the downtown area from the Courthouse and believes the proposal is an eye sore.

Member of the public Robert Von Esch believes that a third hotel will ruin the historical balance of the City of Prescott. He would like to see this project denied.

Member of the public Cathey Rusing stated that this proposal should be looked at like a business deal. She questioned if the owner did his due diligence prior to purchasing this property and did the seller provide false promises at the time of purchase. She does not believe the city should be held responsible for promises made by others or a lack of due diligence.

Member of the public Jim Garing stated that existing setbacks that are non-conforming are irrelevant to this proposal and new uses need to comply with new regulations and requirements. He believes that the building deserves preservation even though it is not a historic contributor.

Member of the public Lyn Herrington-Ekiss does not believe the project fits the surrounding area and would like to see this proposal denied.

Member of the public Shane Ortega said that when he purchased the Hotel St. Michael hotel on Whiskey Row he had to adhere to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for rehabilitation and preservation. He believes that the major issue with this proposal will be the massing of the building.

Member of the public Linda Thompson stated that the balconies need to be removed, and the hotel does not belong in the proposed location. She does not want to see this approved.

Member of the public Sue Griffin asked for clarification on the next steps if this is approved today and by City Council at a later date.

Alex Bramlette Planning Manager explained the process moving forward. She stated that the recommended motion by the Prescott Preservation Commission will go to City Council for approval, once approved by City Council there will be a Special Use Permit (SUP) applied for that receives a courtesy review from the Prescott Preservation Commission, approval from the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council. The last step would be building permit applications where City Staff will review demolition plans and reconstruction plans.

Member of the public Roseann Del Gandio said that Whiskey Row is the crown jewel of Prescott, and this hotel will remove the history from Whiskey Row. Additionally, she has concerns about the safety of the adjacent buildings during demolition and construction of the proposed hotel.

Member of the public Stacey Brown is concerned that the history of Whiskey Row will no longer be intact with the approval of this hotel.

Ms. Nunez stated that this design was sent to the state preservation office in the past and that the local historic preservation review guidelines are informed by the Secretary of Interior. She added that new construction needs to be compatible yet differentiated so there is no false sense of history created.

Matt Podracky Deputy City Attorney stated that the Preservation Commission is here to give an analysis on if this project meets the Historic Preservation Master Plan guidelines. Additionally, he clarified that rear yard setbacks do not apply and referenced page 8-7 of the Historic Preservation Master Plan.

Mr. Stroh stated that the owner has agreed to change the balconies to Juliette balconies and will be engineered by a structural engineer.

Vice Chair Travis said that the new design is much better than the original.

Commissioner Johnson has concerns about setting a precedent moving forward and believes the space is more suitable for retail space.

Ms. Nunez asked if the commission is allowed to include multiple conditions in their motion.

Mr. Podracky stated if the commission wants the City Council to consider conditions in their final approval, they can be included in the motion.

Member Volhontseff believes that the Preservation Commission needs to provide guidance to the City Council about where this project meets and does not meet the Historic Preservation Master Plan guidelines.

Chair Sprain has concerns about the number of stories this project is proposing. He referenced the Historic Master Plan guidelines that limit buildings to 1-3 stories and explained there is nothing that would allow a 4-story building.

Mr. Podracky said that the City Council will see the commissioners' concerns with the meeting minutes and provided guidance for a recommendation of approval or to deny.

Commissioner Volhontseff asked where the guidelines refer to buildings not exceeding 1-3 stories and 48 feet in height.

Chair Sprain stated that it is page 8.19 section 8.1 under district zoning classifications.

Ms. Nunez referenced page 8.9 of the Historic Preservation Master Plan and explained that there are no parameters included for a 4-story building, but questions if that means it is not allowed.

Commissioner Volhontseff said that a limit of 3-stories and a height of 48 feet should be implemented immediately to preserve the character of the district. She believes that since this said "and" instead of "or" that there is not much flexibility around it.

Ms. Nunez stated that it can be part of the Preservation Commissions decision.

Chair Sprain referenced the summary of recommendations on page 8.22 related to adhering to historic height ranges of 1,2, and 3 story buildings.

Ms. Nunez asked if something is omitted, does that mean that it is not allowed.

Mr. Podracky said it will be up to the commission on how they want to create a motion.

Commissioner Volhontseff believes that the design is workable and is not inclined to deny this proposal.

**MOTION BY CHAIR SPRAIN TO RECOMMEND TO DENY HP25-004;
SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR TRAVIS (PASSED 3-1) COMMISSIONER
VOLHONTSEFF DISSENTING.**

4. STAFF UPDATES

No Staff Updates

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Sprain adjourned the meeting at 1:01 pm.



RICHARD SPRAIN, Chairman

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary

10/20/2025

Date