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**Armory Park Historic Zone Advisory Board  
Legal Action Report/Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 6:30PM  
Virtual Meeting**

**AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm. A quorum was established with all eight members of the board present: Ms. Sara Bachman-Williams, Mr. Tom Beal, Mr. John Burr, Ms. Helen Erickson, Mr. Glenn Furnier, Ms. Martha McClements, Mr. Pat O'Brien, and Mr. Maurice Roberts. Absent: none.  
COT staff: Ms. Jodie Brown, HPO, moderator. IT: Mr. Ken Taylor.

**2. Approval of Minutes –February 18, 2020**

Mr. J. Burr, Secretary, had distributed the minutes prior to the meeting. Mr. M. Roberts made a motion to approve the LAR/ minutes as presented, seconded by Ms. S. Bachman-Williams. The motion was approved by 8 votes in favor, 0 opposed, by roll call.

**3. Reviews**

**a. 601 S. Stone  
Construction multiple units on a vacant parcel.  
Courtesy Review**

The project was pre-presented to APHZAB as 3 review documents accompanying the agenda as posted by PDSD. The three documents (taken from T19PRE0212) were: 1) Project Application (dated 8-1-19); 2) Development Package (IID version dated 8-5-19); and 3) Site Plan and Elevations (including IPP, dated 11-18-2019).

As presented in those documents, the project consists of 5 new buildings on a re-subdivision of parcel 117-14-2360 at the southwest corner of 17th Street and Stone Avenues in the Armory Park neighborhood. The parcel is zoned C-3, currently vacant (since 1960) and is 9674 square feet. While it is within the Armory Park Residential Historic District (National Register) it is not within the Armory Park Historic Preservation Zone (HPZ) or APHZAB purview. It is adjacent to two contributing historic residences, also currently zoned C-3.

Those plans show 5 individual units: Building 1- commercial 1st floor with 2

story residence above, height 37.5'. Buildings 2 and 4 - two story residences, height 25'. Building 3- 2 story residence with home office, height 25'. Building 5- commercial 1st floor with 2 story residence above, height 35.5'. Total built project footprint of 5165.4 ft sq. with total commercial area of 2081 ft sq., and 8495 ft sq. (on multiple levels) residential use. The site plan indicates 0' lot lines (some partial) on the west, north and south, with approximately 8' setback on the east. Eight on-site parking spaces are provided, and 5 on-street places are identified along the property lines. Four short term bicycle parking spaces were suggested in the IPP (but not apparently identified on the plan). Six street trees (Desert Museum palo-verde) are indicated for the landscaping plan. Requests for modifications to IID standards made by the proposed project include elimination of the required landscape buffers, elimination of the 25' maximum height within 30' of adjacent residential properties IID rule, and more than 25% reduction of required parking. No neighborhood meeting for a proposed IPP for the project is scheduled currently.

Mr. Phillip Neher, architect (studio Caban) presented a revised version of the project and new informational pages. He explained the basics of the site including location, zoning and relationships to the adjacent parcels. Pages 1, 8, 9,10 and 11 of the initial development package were shown, but now also included a page that showed usage of buildings in the area (residential, commercial, cultural and institutional, identified by color). A second new page (identified as page 12) showed the street-face elevations of all buildings within each streetscape in the larger area including known potential adjacent projects in process and this project. It appears another new project for a 3 story project (commercial 1st floor with two stories of residential apartments above is apparently proposed for 709 S. 7th Ave., diagonally southwest of this project). The area included in these streetscape elevations ranged from the Police Department building (Cushing Street/ Stone Ave.) to the new (Five Points) Baffert project (18th Street/ Stone Ave.) and showed the up/ down pattern flows of building heights in the area. A 3rd new page showed the 300' notification map.

Board questions regarding these images included: 1) Q: Will Barrio Veijo be notified/informed of this project as well? A: (Phillip Neher) We will if we can, although this project is entirely in Armory Park. 2) Q: Are any plans available for the proposed 3 story project across the street and will we (APHZAB) have the opportunity to review/ view them? A: (Ms. Brown): unsure if they are yet available to PDSD/ unsure of processes proposed for that project—will provide an update as information becomes available.

Mr. Neher then discussed revisions to the site plan that have now been made. The western setback will now be 3' east of the west property-line after consultation with the COT and TDOT&M. Because Stone Ave. is on the MS&R (Major Streets and Routes) map with a proposed 90' width from center line, setbacks may be extended, the result being an unfortunate regulatory width, with the expected result being a significant reduction in developable area of the lot; a large portion of the western side of the lot had huge setbacks—up to 21'. This has now been revised down to a probably necessary 3' because of a proposed new, future Modern Streetcar line down Stone Ave.( southbound on Stone/ northbound on 6th Ave.) Mr. Neher then showed another new page that showed all of the pre-existing non-compliant properties (re MS&R) along Stone Ave.

Other now required setbacks (to the north for trash/service and egress issues) and east (for TEP easements) have further led to the tighter new site plan. Also, commercial parking requirements prohibit back-out spaces to be used (and potential revisions to the current storm drain grates) so the on-site parking plan has been reduced to 4 spaces from the earlier 8 provided.

Mr. Neher then went on to explain the conceptual ideas for the project. Studio Caban's interpretation of the area suggests that individual buildings/volumes rather than a single large structure is more in keeping with area patterns. He believed the building placement and spaces between them were evident in the patterns of the areas surrounding the project, if not specifically within the development zone. They (the designers) intended to have modern buildings that relate to area forms but distinct from them, and reflective of their study of the height and volume patterns in the area. He showed revised elevations (all 4 sides now in addition to the previous 2 street facades provided and now revised). They included different windows/ sizes/ locations/ patterns. These presented plans now indicate: 1) three 2nd story windows, one punch out- East facade; 2) three 2nd story windows, building gaps- North facade; 3) 5 windows, one punch-out, one screen and one gate-West facade; and 4) three 2nd story windows, 5 gates, 1 screen and one door- South facade.

Mr. Neher also showed (new) interior floor plans for the five units showing proposed commercial spaces, the home office with door, and the relationships of the proposed courtyards to the various buildings. He presented another new page of inspirational "lifestyle" type photographs of exterior and interior views (used conceptually) for the proposed buildings. Most of the other images generally were identified by the architect as "not in Tucson" but primarily "in Mexico" and other locations. Finally, brief images of computer-generated interior views for a few units were shown.

As a final portion of the presentation, some perspective streetscape views were provided— showing the project from 17th Street looking West (from about 100 ft west of Sixth Ave.), and from the Southwest looking Northeast towards the 17th Street facades in spatial relationships (volumes and a few more windows visible). Mr. Neher concluded the presentation by saying that his team's perspective was that this project relates well to the city's needed infill mixed-use project goals.

The Board had several points of discussion and concerns that can be considered under 6 major themes.

1) **Height:** It was noted that the IID (in this case GIIIS—Greater Infill Incentive Subdistrict) limited heights of new projects adjacent to residential use lots (whatever their zoning) to 25' maximum height within 30' of the property line. Several people were concerned with this request to alter IID standards. It was indicated that this rule was one of the tradeoffs supported by historic neighborhoods to ensure that no property owner would have to deal with a potential blank wall of over 25 feet high along a property line and would limit overviews on to their property, if the IID was allowed in historic zones. Although the heights of the proposed buildings generally adhere to this Rule, two buildings-units 1 and 5 are proposed to be 37.5' high and 35.5' high respectively. Both are closer to adjacent properties than

allowed by the 30-foot rule, the closest (building 1) apparently within 10 feet of the north property line. Some members were OK with the increased height considering the underlying zoning (C-3), but others were not and felt that IID standards should apply to the project and not be waived.

2) **Site Utilization:** The intensity of the development with no on site landscaping, 5 units per streetscape (17th Street) and general pattern of the development were a concern of several members of the board. It was noted that there may possibly be one or two examples in the overall neighborhood of 5 properties along a block, but the overwhelming majority was for four or less properties per street face. It appears to be more intensive in site utilization from anything in the development zone, if not also in most, if not all, specific block-faces in the entire historic neighborhood.

3) **Parking:** It was generally agreed that the reduction from 8 onsite (back-out) spaces to 4 was an improvement from the prior plan. It was suggested that one of the street parking spaces (identified as space 15 per the IIP of the prior plan) may not be a legal parking space because it is so close to the intersection. It will be PDSD and TDOT&M to determine if the space is of actual legal use. Additionally, it was noted that the IPP plan indicates that new angled parking along the south side of 17th Street (along the Primavera property) does not appear to be proposed within the current iteration of that re-development plan and may not be a valid presupposition for determinations for the proposed IPP for this project.

4) **Streetscape:** It was noted that most of the adjoining existing (historic) sidewalks were apparently built in c.1938 by the CCC building works project. Several locations have historic stamps that will be required to be retained/ preserved by historic preservation standards. In terms of the IID requirements for street activation and site visibility, several members were concerned that only one visible door is apparent, and only one at-grade window is visible in the current iteration of the plans. Otherwise, the facades of both streetscapes appear to be blank walls with flat face gates and very little porosity to the site, at least to an 8' height. Generally, most felt open screens, with the ability to perceive depth and a play of light at the streetscape were essential. Possibilities include perforated gates, perforated brickwork, more fenestration or other options that may allow for some impression of activity or sense of depth for pedestrians and would be welcomed options. Blank walls along a facade are not an ideal Streetscape Standards outcome. It was suggested that an increase of perceived permeability to the site was needed, and that blank walls/ opaque gates were not appropriate for the area.

5) **Compatibility:** In this matter it was generally acknowledged that the design team and the reviewers may have different understandings of this concept. Several members were concerned with Rhythm, Proportions, Openings/Indentations, Patterns, Massing, Volumes, Details and Streetscape in relationship to the surrounding overall historic area. The design team suggested that this project plan is a playful contemporary interpretation of these rules/suggestions and believe that new construction should be new, modern and currently relative, but also that the overall

proposed forms and patterns do actually relate to the area, by inspiration rather than derivation. Mr. Neher acknowledged that “classic form and rhythm” were not entertained by the design team, because “things change”. It was noted and generally agreed that many on the board appreciated the thoughtful presentation and many premises of the design concept and that generally, we are collectively pleased that each unit is individual and unique. Most board members appeared to be positive about interior specifics, if less so about exterior details.

6) **Details:** Some members thought that simple forms without details, with stucco smooth walls and minimal openings looked “cheap” or “austere” and not reflective of the neighborhood. It was later clarified that the entire project was actually solid masonry with flat troweled stucco with integral color (white) and that no “framing” was part of the project. Several members identified elements in the presented “inspirational views” and thought that more detailing, with surface textures, changes in materials and patterns, etc. would be a more compatible response. No one objected to flat parapet roofs per se but many wanted more architectural articulation that would enliven the exterior facades and provide some sense of variation, play of light and depth perception between volumes, as the project moves forward.

Other comments: It was requested several times during the meeting that the current iteration of the proposal should be made available publicly, or at least to the HPO and board. The developer was hesitant in providing the (current virtual) presentation because the project was in transition. It was noted that the posted (future) record of the meeting would reflect what was presented as a matter of public record. It is hoped that this LAR/Minutes will reflect accurately this meeting for the public for future reference.

Comments/ Rebuttals/ Answers from the design team as to these topics of concern:

1) Height: It’s necessary for the increased height at the actual corner to define the area. Will look into reducing building 5 so only height requested beyond IID standard is at the corner. Liked “book-end” concept but would look at potential changes. Single “thrust” at corner may also work.

2) Site Utilization: The design team is actively looking at “reducing the proposal to four units”. It may make the project more relatable to the area and more build-able under current considerations. The design team would prefer to release the updated reduced unit revisions for further review and consideration, rather than this version as presented.

3) Parking: We have not encountered any opposition to the proposed parking locations by either TDOT&M or PDSD. We are unaware of TPD limitations but will look into it.

4) Streetscape: We would like to preserve the historic markers in existing sidewalks and will work with the board to make sure this happens. We will evaluate the streetscape facades and attempt to make them more “porous”.

5) Compatibility: We believe modern simple forms are a better response for newly constructed buildings. We believe basic tenets of compatibility have been met without replicating historic models.

6) Details: We will look into the feasibility of adding variability and more details to the exterior facades of the project, as suggested by our “inspirations page”.

Martha McClements, Chair, summed up the general consensus by way of conclusion of the review: Although out of our purview, we would encourage the reduction in site utilization to four units. More outside space for units would be encouraged. Keep us informed. We hope our comments are helpful to you as you move through the process.

No formal action taken.

**4. Design Guidelines Project (note: Mr. Tom Beal left the meeting at 7:33pm due to technical issues.)**

**a. Update on the design guidelines.**

Ms. Brown, HPO, related to the board that she had received a detailed draft of recommended edits from the Chair of PRS and that those comments were making final rounds among that board. Apparently, a version with tracked comments which will allow for “accept changes” will be available to the APHZAB for review, hopefully well in advance of the revisions/ discussion now scheduled for the June 25, 2020 PRS meeting agenda. It was suggested that some citations and clarifications on verbatim quotes (i.e. SOI standards) would be part of the recommendations. When asked, Ms. Brown suggested no revisions before the feedback is shared with APHZAB would be needed. It was further clarified that Mr. Ken Taylor, IT, would continue as editor, with the aid of Mr. Burr, Ms. McClements and other participants on the Design Guidelines Working Group for content edits beyond typographical/editorial changes.

**5. Minor Review Update**

**a. Updates on recent Minor Reviews provided.**

Ms. McClements, Chair, provide the updates on two recent minor reviews she had conducted with PDS staff/ PRS. Two projects adjacent to the San Carlos Apartments (63 and 69 E 13th Street) requested minor reviews for roof shingle replacements and new useful ADA compliant ramps. Both HPZ 20-024 and HPZ 20-025 were approved by the PDS director, with conditions, on 5-14-2020. The other prospective minor review is for new air-conditioning units at 424 E 16th St. The property recently sold and the new buyer would like AC when he moves in shortly. It's expected to be approved for mechanical upgrade permits.

**6. Call to the Board**

Only one comment was made, by Mr. Burr. He noted that an IID DRC meeting was now scheduled for June 10, 2020 which will review proposed new accessory structures (bathroom and stage/storage buildings on the parking lot

adjacent to the Hotel Congress.

**7. Call to the Audience**

Ms. Brown received 2 comments by email, prior to the May 18, 2020, 12pm cut-off requirement for advance comments/ call to the audience. The comments were read into the record and made part of the record. Neighborhood residents Ms. Phyllis Factor and Ms. Nadine Rund formally commented. Both were in reaction to item 3. They had concerns regarding the compatibility of the proposed project with the existing development in Armory Park. Please see the official posted virtual minutes of the meeting for a verbatim recounting of those comments.

Ms. Brown also noted that these virtual meetings will most likely continue for the foreseeable future. The present format required comments the day before by 12 noon, will likely continue as the process for most review boards such as APHZAB. A deviation in this form will happen for the Zoning Examiner meeting coming up on May 28. For that meeting, being a Public Hearing, comments may be made in real time by virtual participation per prior registration. The City is evaluating these new processes as it moves forward under present conditions.

**8. Future Agenda Items - Information Only**

Nothing was noted for future meetings beyond the scheduled PRS review of the design guidelines scheduled currently for the 6-25-2020 PRS meeting.

**9. Adjournment** The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm.

The next scheduled APHZAB meeting is June 16, 2020.