

Ms. Sally Stang, Director
Housing and Community Development
City of Tucson

RE: MOA Comments and Objections from the Barrio Historico Advisory Committee
106 Process, Downtown Motor Hotel

Dear Sally,

1) The MOA is unacceptably vague in stating that "the proposed new construction will match the height of an Armory Park Historic Residential District Contributing property behind the project property". Which property behind the project property ? And what height would that be ? And what evidence to you have to support that the heights of these properties match ?

The height of the proposed building 54' according to the drawings.

2) The MOA is incorrect in stating that, "the undertaking will adversely affect the contributing property at 383 South Stone" and " no other historic properties within the APE will be adversely affected". This is inaccurate and false.

The Barrio Historico Advisory Board has submitted detailed comparisons of the proposed building to 22 surrounding historic buildings including 18 surrounding historic properties in the Armory Park Historic District and 4 in Barrio Historico(Barrio Libre) Historic District. The proposed building is nearly 100% incompatible with all of these and other historic properties in both historic districts.

The criteria used in the comparisons for compatibility included: height, size, massing, materials, number of stories, roof type, building form, parking, rhythm, proportions, windows, doors, character, street scape, and site utilization.

The comparisons submitted included addresses, photographs, and measurements, plus written, numeric and visual comparison.

Clearly the proposed four story is incompatible and hence a negative effect on both the Armory Park and Barrio Historico Historic Districts. Hence the MOA cannot truthfully and accurately say that, "no other historic properties within the APE will be adversely affected".

Nor can the MOA say that no other historic properties will be affected because , " the proposed new construction will match the height of an Armory Park Residential District contributing property behind the project". First, there is no evidence that this statement is true and second, the criteria for compatibility include many more criteria than height.

The proposed building is, on average, is 32 times bigger, 2.6 times taller, and contains 2.5 times as many stories as the 18 surrounding historic properties compared in the Armory park District.

In the case of the 4 Barrio Historico historic properties across the street from the site, the proposed building is, on average, 15 times bigger, 2.3 times taller, and contains 2.75 more stories.

In all 22 historic properties considered the proposed building is incompatible in materials, details, and scale. The scale of the 22 historic properties is a "residential scale" provided by the brick, stone, wood, shingles, proportions, dimensions, doors, windows, and details among other things.

The scale of the proposed building is "institutional" characteristic of large generic apartments, office buildings, hospitals, and prisons.

The point is that the MOA is incorrect in stating that, "no other historic properties within the APE will be affected as the proposed new construction will match the height of an Armory Park Historic District contributing party". This is diversion and double talk.

Your findings, your 106 process, and your MOA need to be based on documentation.

Unfortunately no comparative analysis has been done in the 106 process with the exception of the data submitted May 10 by the Barrio Historico Advisory Board.

The MOA is premature and the 106 process is incomplete.

3) The MOA is also incomplete and misleading because it fails to state that the proposed building has adverse effect to the character, fabric, context, and environment of the Armory Park Historic District and the Barrio Libre (Barrio Historico) Historic District.

The Barrio Historico Advisory Board has provided photos of 22 historic properties surrounding the site plus numeric, written, and visual analysis including the comparative same scale elevation illustration. The Architect Phillip Neher of Rick Joy and Associates Architecture has also submitted photo montages which we have also sent to you.

Each of these items illustrates the damaging impact of the proposed incompatible building on both the Armory Park and Barrio Historico (Barrio Libre) Historic Districts.

Damage to the character, context, fabric, and environment of the Historic Districts is not a minor issue. But it has been essentially omitted by the city preservation office, your findings, and the conduct of the 106 process.

Conclusions in your findings and MOA need to be based on sound analysis, which you and the preservation office have not provided. Your findings and MOA conclusions cannot be supported by the facts.

The 106 process is seriously flawed and the MOA is incomplete, misleading, and in error.

4) The MOA clause stating that, "the City of City has engaged in public participation" "as part of the consultative process" is a misleading statement. There has been no public meeting in six months. "Posting comments to your web site" is hardly engaging the public in participation in a meaningful consultative process.

You seem afraid or ashamed to notify or face the property owners and residents in the two districts. Whatever the motive you have the obligation to broadly, clearly, and directly inform the public and residents and property owners of your findings with clear visual and written and numeric data on the proposed building.

The 106 process is incomplete and the MOA is premature until this has occurred.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's letter of March 9, 2015 to you they stated, "The ACHP appreciates the effort the City has made to post documents on a publicly accessible website. However we encourage the City to use different options to engage the public".

That hasn't occurred. Your process, notification of findings, and the MOA have not been transparent nor inclusive. The 106 process is incomplete and the MOA is premature until a public meeting with real notification has occurred.

5) The MOA contains no clear determination that the ACHP finds no adverse effect of the historic properties in Armory Park beyond the Joesler building.

The ACHP letter to you of May 14 states that they had received one of our letters of objection to your findings. They state, "This letter is similar to the objection raised previously, which we addressed in our letter of May 1, 2015. Since the objection to the adverse effect finding has similarities to the previous objection we believe that we have responded to the dispute. Accordingly there is no need for us to treat this as a separate objection"

On the contrary the previous objection to which they refer is the objection of the Tucson Preservation Foundation which objected to the exclusion of Barrio Libre (Barrio Historico).

The Barrio Historico Advisory Board (which include a property owner of two historic properties in the Armory Park District in the same block as the proposed building) made different objections than those of the Tucson Preservation Foundation.

Our objections are quite clear

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1) we objected to the finding that the proposed building is compatible in "size, scale, and massing" with the historic properties in Armory Park as well as Barrio Historico.

2) we objected to incompatibility of the proposed building as measured by appropriate criteria (listed above) to the historic properties in Armory Park and Barrio Historico.

3) Failure of the findings regarding the negative effect of the proposed building to the character, context, fabric, environment, etc to both the Armory Park Historic District and the Barrio Historico Historic District.

If the ACHP wishes to discount Barrio Historico we don't agree with them but they still have the obligation to deal with our objection to the findings concerning Armory Park and the extensive documentation we submitted May 10.

The MOA does not have a clear statement from the ACHP that the proposed building has no adverse effect on the Armory Park historic properties beyond the historic Joesler building. They have not responded to the extensive evidence we have submitted May 10.

Nor has that evidence been examined by the 106 process. Nor have you provided evidence to support your findings.

In the ACHP letter of May 1 to you the ACHP stated, " we have reviewed the background information and found the City's consideration of the adverse effect to be thorough". They are referring to the decision to declare Barrio Historico unaffected by the proposed building Where is the City's "thorough consideration" ? We haven't seen it . Please forward us a copy.

6) Item "d" of the stipulations refers working with the Armory Park Neighborhood Association regarding "building colors with an emphasis on masses".

I am unaware of paint being used to establish "masses" in a building.

This stipulation makes clear that even at this date the final appearance of the building is unknown to the property owners and residents of historic properties surrounding the site.

Obviously the MOA is premature until that appearance is determined and presented meaningfully to the public and surrounding property owners and residents.

7) The "Dispute Resolution" item XII in the MOA places all control in the hands of the the owner. This is inappropriate if the intent is "dispute resolution"

8) The Mitigation stipulations items "c thru j" provide no relief to the negative effects of the proposed building on the surrounding historic properties or to the districts themselves.

If it is written somewhere in law that merely placing 2% of the requested HUD Home Funds into acts unrelated to the proposed building removes the negative effects please provide us a copy of that law.

The mitigation required for the negative effects caused by the proposed building would be a smaller building, a shorter building, compatible with the surrounding historic properties in height, scale, proportions, materials, site utilization, details, doors, windows, character, street scape etc.

9) Item "f" of the stipulations refers to the "Barro Viejo Neighborhood Association". The City no longer recognizes this organization as the neighborhood association. It has held no publicly noticed elections for six years, nor issued meeting announcements nor minutes during that time period.

In summary the 106 process is incomplete and the MOA is premature. And the need for a public meeting and update is glaring.

Sincerely,

Jody Gibbs, co-chair person
Barrio Historico Advisory Board