

2023

**Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission**  
Plans Review Subcommittee (PRS)

**LEGAL ACTION REPORT/Minutes**

**Thursday, May 11, 2023**

Pursuant to safe practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, all in-person meetings are cancelled until further notice. This meeting was held virtually to allow for healthy practices and social distancing. The meeting was accessible at provided link to allow for participating virtually and/or calling in.

Note: A recording of the entire meeting (audio/video) can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUfRGd7RxAUv6rMbRNEurjg1iY8N4ZALR>

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Meeting called to order at 1:01 P.M., and per roll call, a quorum was established.

Commissioners Present: Teresita Majewski (Chair), Carol Griffith, Joel Ireland, Savannah McDonald (left the meeting at 1:03 P.M. returned at 1:31 P.M.

Commissioners Excused/Joined Late: Jan Mulder

Applicants/Public Present: Greg Clark (Case 3c applicant's representative), Bill Mackey (Worker Incorporated), Linda Mayro and Scott O'Mack (Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation), Corky Poster (Poster Mirto McDonald [PMM]); Sara Fontaine (Pima County Facilities Management)

Staff Present: Jodie Brown, Maria Gayosso, Michael Taku (all Planning and Development Services Department)

**2. Approval of the Legal Action Report/Minutes for the Meeting of April 27, 2023**

**Motion:** It was moved by Commissioner Griffith to approve the Legal Action Report/Minutes for the meeting of April 27, 2023, as submitted.

Commissioner McDonald seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of 4-0. (Commissioner Mulder absent)

**3. Historic Preservation Zone Review Cases**

*UDC Section 5.8/TSM 9-02.0.0/Historic District Design Guidelines/Revised Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines*

*[Commissioner McDonald recused from the next case at 1:03 P.M and left the meeting]*

- 3a. TO-PRE-0523-00192, 34 W Esperanza Avenue, Ajo**  
Rehabilitation and restoration of the existing gymnasium.  
Courtesy Review (County)/Individually Listed-Curley School  
Rehabilitation and Restoration Standards

Scott O'Mack provided a PowerPoint introduction to the project. Pima County has owned the gym since 2009 when it was purchased with bond money. Funding for the current project is from American Rescue [Plan] Act (ARPA) funds. From the beginning, the purpose of the project was to provide a functional multipurpose building for the community of Ajo. The design team is PMM.

Ajo is a historic mining town with layout defined by the mine and related features. The Ajo Townsite Historic District is in the central part of town; the town was laid out in 1914 using the City Beautiful philosophy of town layout – a radiating pattern of streets and architecture laid out in the same grid pattern. Major features are the plaza, the train depot, the Curley School Campus including the Curley Gym. The historic district was listed in 2001 with a period of significance of 1914–1950 and is significant at the national level for Community Planning and Development and Architecture. Curley School and Gym are contributors. In 2008, the Curley School Campus, including the gym, was listed in the National Register individually (they were already contributors to the National Register District). The main school was built in 1919, and the Curley Gym was built 1937–1940.

Corky Poster then presented on the rehabilitation and restoration, standing in for his colleagues from PMM, Daniela Nuñez and Charles Pifer, who couldn't attend today's meeting. Mr. Poster noted that they are taking a preservation approach to the exterior of the building and a rehabilitation approach to the interior. The gymnasium will have multiple uses: as a waystation to help in the transportation of migrants, an event space for the community of Ajo, and a gymnasium. For the building work, PMM will use a light touch on the exterior and interior renovation, only updating what must be updated. The rear portion of the building interior will be renovated to meet the first use and will include mechanical, electrical, and plumbing updates, and the main space will be restored to properly function as a gym. The outdoor basketball court will be changed to parking. Several years ago, the building had an exterior renovation to address structural issues; the work being discussed today is the second phase. The roof of the gym has an open-truss framework, and the floor is original as are the built-in bleachers. They will use a preservation (light-touch) approach on this portion of the interior. The new programming and support spaces will have more changes. At the end of his presentation, he invited further comments from Pima County staff, and Linda Mayro and Sara Fontaine spoke. Chair Majewski noted that the project is a great example of adaptive reuse of an important building in a rural town. She commended the county for their dedication regarding this project.

Chair Majewski asked if any of the locker rooms were to remain, and Mr. Poster said no. The new bathrooms will be used as changing rooms as needed.

Commissioner Griffith said that when she worked for the State Historic Preservation Office, some of the work at Ajo was initiated. She is glad to see it moving forward. She also asked about showers, and Mr. Poster said that migrant use of the facility was sufficiently short-term and wouldn't require showers. Commissioner Ireland commended Mr. O'Mack and Mr. Poster on the presentation and asked about the beautiful can lights in place in the gym. Ms. Fontaine said they will be replaced, and Mr. Poster noted that it is doubtful that the current lighting is original. Mr. O'Mack brought up an image from the plans to show the proposed new lighting – high-bay LED suspended light fixtures. Chair Majewski asked if there are any kitchen facilities. Mr. Fontaine said there will be a small room with a refrigerator and a place for crock pots and microwaves. Mr. Poster said it would be like a warming kitchen.

Chair Majewski asked if any outreach was held with the community to ask what would be useful. Ms. Fontaine said no, it was more of direction from the [County] administration with this idea of migrants being the focus and so then they just made sure to include things that would also be useful to the community. Ms. Mayro noted that when they originally purchased the building, they did outreach. In addition to the supporting migrants' function, the building can be used for community events like art shows, teenage dances, yoga classes, and the like. The building will serve multiple functions, and there will be a parks manager.

Chair Majewski closed the discussion by commending the project proponents and PMM on the excellent plan and wishing them good luck. Everyone looks forward to seeing the finished building.

No action was taken.

*[Commissioner McDonald returned to the meeting at 1:31 P.M.]*

- 3b. TD-DEV-0423-00221/SD-0423-00042, 130 E. Congress**  
Reconstruct storefront.  
Full Review/Downtown National Register Historic District  
Individually Listed – J.C. Penney/Chicago Store/Rehabilitation Standards

Staff Brown provided background on this case, noting that PRS previously did a courtesy review. The building, a contributing property to the Downtown National Register District, is within the Rio Nuevo area and subject to full PRS and Design Review Board (DRB) review. Staff Gayosso was available at this meeting to answer any questions regarding the Rio Nuevo process. Bill Mackey showed the development zone and summarized the proposed work, which will be a north façade, first-level storefront modification focusing on the columns, store front, base, and entries. The building owner's goal is to increase the internal square footage. Most existing tile will be removed, but tile will be kept if possible at alcoves. The ceiling of the alcove to be removed. The horizontal steel beam with prismatic glass above to stay; it is held up by three columns. The covers of the columns will be removed to expose the 6-inch pipe inside. The window wall will float in front of the pipe columns. They will reshape one door. The spacing of the three new doors will be based on the spacing of the prismatic glass. The 2-by-4

extruded aluminum window frames will have a base – a pony wall that will vary between 9 and 16 inches in height. The look of the base takes design elements from the available historic photo [dating to 1919 or earlier]. The columns have varied in look throughout the years. Mr. Mackey then reviewed the Sanborn maps to look at the evolution of the bays. The period of significance of the building is 1903 up to 1957. He ended the presentation with a slide of the Rio Nuevo Area Zoning Design Standards and invited questions.

Commissioner McDonald asked about removal of the tile on the columns. Mr. Mackey responded that the tile will be removed all the way up to the “Chicago Music Store” frieze. Stucco will be used on the column at the corner. Commissioner McDonald noted that as far as we can tell from the historic photo, the base is folded sheet metal like flashing. Is that right? Painted? Mr. Mackey confirmed that the material is folded sheet metal. Bump outs are also folded metal that will be painted black, and when Commissioner McDonald asked, he confirmed that the storefront itself is anodized aluminum and 1-inch insulated glazing.

Commissioner Griffith said her question about the columns was already answered. At the corners, columns will remain, and at the northeast corner the little articulation will remain stuccoed. In between are the 6-inch steel posts.

Commissioner Ireland asked for confirmation that the 6-inch posts will be inside the store and that the existing ceiling will be removed. Mr. Mackey said yes to both. Commissioner Ireland asked if any features being removed are significant/original? Mr. Mackey said that depends on what you mean by original. Some elements to be removed are part of a previous façade removed 15–20 years ago. Chair Majewski asked how far the new façade will be moved out, and Mr. Mackey said to the property line. She also asked Staff Gayosso when DRB is meeting, and the meeting date is May 19. If DRB proposes any changes from what PRS has said, the project will return to PRS.

Discussion was held. Action was taken.

**Motion:** It was moved by Commissioner McDonald to recommend approval of the project as presented.

Commissioner Griffith seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of 4-0. (Commissioners Mulder absent)

- 3c. **TC-COM-0223-00614 [corrected, per Staff Brown, from how it had been on the agenda 000614], 261–265 N Main Avenue**  
Reconstruction of a front porch.  
Courtesy Review/El Presidio Historic Preservation Zone  
Contributing Resource/Rehabilitation Standards

Staff Brown provided background on this case. An emergency demolition order for the porch had been issued because of a life-safety issue with the porch. The case has already been to the El Presidio Historic Preservation Zone Advisory Board (EPHZAB) for a courtesy review. They had comments, but these were not written up at the time of today's PRS meeting. The demolition packet had photos of how the porch looked.

Greg Clark presented on behalf of the owner. As of today's meeting, date, the porch has not yet been removed. It is shored up and secured. Mr. Clark is looking for feedback today but said the property was not in a Historic Preservation Zone (HPZ). Staff Brown clarified that the property is a contributor to both the El Presidio HPZ and the El Presidio National Register District. Mr. Clark showed the development zone. The property is located diagonally across from the Cheney House. Mr. Clark explained the problems with the existing porch and how it articulates with the adobe structure behind. Mr. Clark wanted clarification on whether the existing concrete columns could be replaced with something else more like on an early 1800s porch. There is adobe construction behind the porch. The engineers that looked at the existing porch said it could not be repaired. The porch is barely supported against the 20-inch-thick adobe wall. A beam ledger had been attached to the adobe wall but is now gone. Various methods have been used to hold the porch to the building. The existing porch was held up by six concrete columns with the bases sitting on soil (no footings). The columns are leaning outward. Mr. Clark wanted to be sure we felt he tried hard enough to see if the porch could be saved. Engineers said the rafter size has to be increased, and the porch has to be attached to the adobe behind.

Mr. Clark and his client are committed to rebuilding some porch but instead of replicating the concrete columns or using some faux fiberglass wrap, would like to use 6 by 6s on 16-by-16 CMU piers. There would be the same wall, same height, but at the base there would be brand new footings, brand new concrete slab about the entrance, same spacing of the posts, same slope and pitch of the roof, except that these rafters will be 2 by 6 instead of what is there now. Same overhanging top or cap to the short wall, but we propose to have six CMU rebar piers with a 6-by-6 wooden post above. He showed a diagram of the floor plan and noted that they would just like to use a modern, efficient method of rebuilding rather than trying to replicate posts.

He said that Staff Brown believes that this ca. 1900 addition [the porch] to the original buildings could have its own contributing status, and so changing the character of the supports would cause the building to no longer contribute. It also seems to him that within the [Secretary of the Interior's] Standards there is talk of going to a previous era. So, where a change has occurred, you can go backward. He would argue that wooden posts are more in character with the traditional Sonoran weight or size of posts. He showed Sanborn maps to illustrate the history of the property. The earliest Sanborn Maps are 1883 and 1886. By 1889, the porch (shade structure) had been added to the adobe buildings, with a pitched roof being added ca. 1900, and the wrapped porch by 1901. By 1831, the property was a four-plex. He said that when EPHZAB did a courtesy review, 3 or 4 members didn't have a problem with slender wood posts. One member said that

the tapered columns had their own historic interest, going back to what Staff Brown said. He wants to know what method of reconstruction would be allowed for the columns and the attachment to the building that would maintain its contributing status.

Chair Majewski asked for the period of significance of the property. Mr. Clark said 1880s to 1912. Staff Brown said she did not say the property would lose its contributing status if the change was made but said that the property would potentially lose its status if the porch was not reconstructed. She also expressed concern that the proposal to replace the existing columns is potentially not consistent with the Standards. There was no photographic evidence that slender posts were ever used. Mr. Clark has done some additional research, but historic photos are needed. Maybe consider putting a 4-by-4 or 6-by 6-steel post and then wrap it in a material that would replicate the existing columns. She never said they had to be concrete. She noted all this just to be clear for the record.

Mr. Clark apologized that he mischaracterized what Staff Brown had said. He's just trying to convey the concern about what is appropriate, because regarding the fiberglass that's made, he has heard some comments and doesn't want it to look "cheesy." There are some that have marble dust embedded in them to give the feel of concrete, but he feels that knocking on a hollow fiberglass post doesn't really have integrity. They want to rebuild the porch and maintain its contributing status.

Chair Majewski asked regarding reconstruction versus compatible but slightly different rehabilitation. Staff Brown said this is for the most part a reconstruction in terms of the roof structure and the pony wall that's going around, and its rehabilitation in terms of the supports. The current proposal for 6 by 6 posts is not a reconstruction because it's a square post. She also noted that at EPHZAB the structural elements were discussed, but these are still being worked out. The discussion centered around making this a free-standing porch – so it wouldn't be dependent on the house. Mr. Clark said this was correct, but he has not done a work-up for that yet. Staff Brown would say that's a rehabilitation.

Chair Majewski noted that it's very important that Mr. Clark talk to people who truly understand adobe. There are structural engineers that work with adobe specialists and understand that creative solutions are needed. Mr. Clark suggested he might be able to retain the existing columns and put them in front of new columns as decorative elements [no one on PRS thought this was a viable idea]. Chair Majewski asked Staff Brown to clarify that the property is a contributor to the HPZ. Staff Brown didn't know where he got the idea that it wasn't and also clarified that because it is a commercial property (a rental) it's not in the historic tax credit program.

Commissioner Griffith noted that in terms of replicating something earlier, if you don't have any photos, it is not something you want to do. And the other thing is, it will be completely new. It's not going to be a historic element to the building anymore. He doesn't know how others feel – whether it is reconstruction, rehabilitation, whatever. But you want something compatible but distinctive. You

want the same massing. Go for a similar look but it's not going to be historic anymore. She also suggested that vines need to be cut down because they could have eroded the sides of the porch.

Commissioner Ireland asked if columns could be reused. Chair Majewski said they look pretty damaged and spalled at the base. Mr. Clark said it is feared they couldn't adequately support a reconstructed porch. The engineers consulted vary in their opinions on this. Commissioner Ireland asked about the connection to the house. Mr. Clark responded that three different engineers said it has to be self-sustaining. It has to support itself and not put weight on the adobe behind it. Mr. Clark wants someone he could talk to that might allow a ledger to be placed up above it. But if a ledger can't be attached to the adobe walls, then it has to have six posts along the back that would be up against the structure vertically, and then the high end of the porch would sit upon those. Commissioner Ireland said that we don't want to ask anything that's impossible to do. But we do have to use the [Secretary's] Standards to evaluate.

Commissioner McDonald thanked Mr. Clark for the presentation, the thoroughness of the study, his interest, and for the research he's done and the background data collection so that he is making the right choice moving forward. She appreciates that. Regarding the columns... to her, based on the period of significance and the sequence of the building additions over time, they would be a character-defining feature. She would, if this is indeed considered a reconstruction, want to see them reconstructed. And she doesn't believe they have to be concrete. She has personally done a similar reconstruction using other materials – steel wrapped in masonry, wrapped in other finish systems to get that look, because it is as she said, a pretty character-defining feature. It's a very prominent part of the project, part of the structure, especially on that façade. She would, of course, like Carol [Commissioner Griffith] be happy and willing to consider going back to the previous era, if there was very convincing documentation of what that would look like, and if it was a follow-through as a whole, and not just here and there but a holistic approach to rolling it back to the previous era in terms of where that previous porch was, its extent, its full configuration. If there's some documentation on that she thinks there would be a very compelling reason to roll it back and reconstruct it in that [earlier] form. So, if you can find that, it would be really interesting. But if not, and if this is considered a reconstruction, she feels she would want to see it matched to how it is now as closely as possible. Mr. Clark talked about basically re-creating the full extent of the dimensions of the porch, putting the columns back in the original locations, even the base site wall matching the profile and the height – but in the other material. She thinks this is perfectly fine, but attention must be paid to all those dimensions and re-creating them. But also, regarding the structural ledger, she does work in adobe as well, and she can pass on some contacts for structural engineers she has worked with on an adobe structure on the most recent project where she attached to a new adobe ledger. Actually, it was attached to a new ledger with a through-bolt-type system. So, you would need access to the other side of the wall and kind of basically sandwich in the ledger. But she doesn't know what kind of access you have to the other side of the adobe wall to make that connection. This could be looked at, however, to basically rely on the gravity

condition of the wall to provide that top-side support. Mr. Clark said they absolutely have that [space] and that was a first intention, suggesting to the engineers, there is that gable roof. It peaks up at 27 feet, and the porch is at 11, so there's plenty of room. There was a parapet above the viga-and-dirt roof, so there's four feet inside there, 20-inch-thick walls, so there is access. He would appreciate if Commissioner McDonald could provide some names to Staff Brown who could provide them to him.

Commissioner McDonald will provide some names. She noted that the method they used to fasten was to build in wood blocking or nailers into the adobe where they knew there were attachments coming through. But if they came in later and hadn't planned for that, another thing is carving out the adobe and placing that wood fastener. The latter is more invasive. That's why she has used the sandwich approach in the past. Seems less invasive if you can get the lateral requirements that the structural engineers seem to desire. Commissioner McDonald is convinced that everything looks to be in very poor condition, can't be salvaged, and needs to be replaced. She is curious regarding the columns They appeared to be stuccoed over. Is that the case, or ? Mr. Clark said yes, it does look like it, but he doesn't know if that is original. Underneath that stucco there is a fairly porous kind of rubble concrete with variable-sized aggregate. It almost looks like it was made from what was in the yard. It is an odd thing with large chunks of caliche, some of it's larger rock. Maybe [the columns] were formed by 1 by 3s. Underneath the stucco there is an angularity suggesting it was formed with straight wooden members.

Commissioner McDonald said this is interesting – custom, site-cast columns. Chair Majewski agreed and asked Commissioner McDonald if she had further questions. She responded that the columns are pretty special, and she would miss not seeing if there was something somewhere as close as possible to their design. Commissioner Ireland had no further questions, but Commissioner Griffith asked that if they do a reconstruction ca. 1900, were they going to wrap around the porch, and Mr. Clark said no.

Chair Majewski asked Staff Brown how interaction with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would go. Staff Brown clarified that SHPO isn't involved. They are deferring to the City of Tucson. Mr. Clark called SHPO with questions though. Chair Majewski asked if Staff Brown would be working with him on his plans before he returns to PRS, and she said she will (and also will forward information from Commissioner McDonald). He is working with an architect and an engineer. Chair Majewski noted that the key is that there has to be some differentiation, and we would want to see documentation before he goes the earlier-era route. Mr. Clark noted he has been conducting research at the Arizona Historical Society. He asked if Staff Brown would be the one deciding if what is proposed would maintain contributing status or ? Staff Brown reiterated the process. He would come for formal review to EPHZAB and then PRS. Both bodies would submit recommendations, then a decision letter would be issued by the PDSO director. Staff Brown has an advisory role with the director. Next, Mr. Clark needs to redesign. Staff Brown will answer questions and provide direction, but ultimately, Mr. Clark will present the plans he wants to present, and both



boards will make a recommendation. Those recommendations will go to the direction, and the director will issue the decision. She reminded that had already had courtesy reviews with both EPHZAB and PRS. Suggestions from these bodies differ somewhat, but she reminded him that architects on EPHZAB said little. Mr. Clark said he is aware of that but curious about the contributor status situation. He just wants a ruling so he can proceed but no one seems willing [to give him one].

Chair Majewski explained the situation. PRS can't design his project. But if he has a good historic architect, they can help him understand the character-defining features. If he has a question about those, Staff Brown can answer. The columns are character-defining. You don't have definite evidence that shows those smaller posts were used so I think you need to go with reconstructing the posts. Get somebody who knows adobe and a structural engineer who will work with you. Then think about how it will be slightly different. You'll have the chance to come back to both boards and have feedback from Staff Brown as well. You're not trying to do something crazy. You're basically trying to reconstruct it, so Chair Majewski thinks you won't have much trouble. You've got two critical areas, the joining of the adobe to the porch structure and the posts. Do the rest of PRS members agree that this is not that difficult to do the reconstruction if you have people who know what they're doing to help you with the plans [PRS members agreed].

Mr. Clark repeated that he wants to have design professionals deal with best practices and create a good solution. He would personally prefer not to mimic the columns and just use posts. But he's having trouble finding out who makes this determination. Chair Majewski said that PRS has already advised [PRS members agreed] that if he can't find definitive [photographic] evidence that posts were used in an earlier era then replicate, not mimic the column. Commissioner McDonald said replicate and that he doesn't have to use the same materials. If he follows what we've said, essentially replicate with some slight difference (Jodie can help), she thinks he will be fine. Because it's the front of the property, it's very important. Mr. Clark thanked PRS.

No action was taken.

#### **4. Task Force on Inclusivity Report Recommendations**

##### **4a. Discussion on Best Practices for Naming of City- and County-Owned Physical Assets**

No report at this time, but Chair Majewski noted that she would like to complete this within the next few months.

#### **5. Current Issues for Information/Discussion**

##### **5a. Minor Reviews**

Staff Taku reported that two minor reviews were completed this week, one at 136 W. Simpson for installation of solar panels, and a second review for a fence and two gates around a pool (both reviews at this same address). Three reviews are pending: two in Armory Park and 1 in West University. Commissioner Ireland offered to help with these.

**5b. Appeals**

Staff Taku noted that there are no current appeals.

**5c. Zoning Violations**

Staff Taku noted that there are ongoing and pending cases being worked on for compliance and/or in the review process, and that staff are working with their zoning violation code enforcement liaison. Two cases will be brought to PRS soon: one at 327 E. 13th Street (wall in process for a long time) and the other at 125 E. 16th Street (additional in rear of the property)

**5d. Review Process Issues**

No review process issues were raised.

**6. Summary of Public Comments (Information Only)**

No public comments were received by the posted deadline.

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

The next scheduled meeting is May 25, 2023, and Staff Brown expects a case in Downtown at 33 S. 6th Avenue for a storefront. All PRS members in attendance said they could attend the next meeting.

**8. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 P.M.