

CITY OF FLAGSTAFF HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT – Aspen Niche

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

PZ- 23-00216

Address: Between 24 W Aspen & 12 W Aspen (18 W Aspen)

DATE: Nov 29, 2023

MEETING DATE: December 20, 2023

REPORT BY: Mark Reavis, AICP, NCARB

APN 100-19-002

BACKGROUND

The City of Flagstaff has submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness in the Downtown Overlay for a Public Improvement Project. This Beautification Public Arts Commission (BPAC) funded project is proposing the development of a public space infill improvement. The improvement is the adaptive reuse of a small area of an existing parking lot facing Aspen Ave with the elimination of 2 street facing parking stalls within an existing business's parking lot while maintaining access to their secure parking lot. The project infills between the Century Link building and the Pay N Take with the introduction of a significant art installation component that defines a public space and includes features that serve bicycle parking. BPAC has worked closely with Century Link, the owner of the lot in its utilization of the space as well as with adjacent neighboring properties requesting input.

The property is not in a National Register District but adjacent to the Railroad Addition Historic District, National Register. The public space improvement is within the Downtown Overlay Design Review District. By being within the overlay the project is subject to design review under requirements of the "Design Handbook for Downtown Flagstaff", first published in 1990 and revised in 1997. The handbook has specific guidance language in separate categories: historic buildings, rehabilitation of existing buildings, sign design, design guidelines for color, new buildings, and site design. The Handbook addresses changes in a general way under "Rehabilitation Guidelines for All Existing Buildings" and guidance for "Historic Buildings". The Handbook does not provide clear guidance regarding the development of public spaces between a historic and non-historic building, that is the case with this project. That being said, the Design Handbook for Downtown Flagstaff" will be a primary document for design review compliance where it can be referenced. The Flagstaff Zoning Code Heritage Preservation 10-30.30 notes the US Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation being the supplemental review that is applicable in consideration of additions. Heritage Preservation 10-30.30 also calls out review of appropriateness is to use 10-20.60.050 "Compatibility".

PREVIOUS HPC DECISIONS

This property has not had previous HPC reviews.

REQUEST

This is a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the development of a public space within the Downtown Overlay.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS ISSUE

A project is appropriate if the proposed work alters a cultural resource but does so in such a way that is compatible with the historic character of the resource and all major impacts are mitigated such that the work does not diminish, eliminate, or adversely affect the significance or integrity of the resource. Section [10-30.60.050](#), reviews "Compatibility" as criteria for determining the appropriateness of a

development proposal.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The HPO recommends that the Heritage Preservation Commission may state their preference in the 2 designs but recommends the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the 2 presented options.

OPTIONS FOR COMMISSION DECISION-MAKING:

- 1) The Commission could approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the submitted package -or-
 - 2) The Commission could request modifications to the proposal and include them as conditions of approval – or –
 - 3) Continue the HPC review to a date certain and ask the applicant to come back with a modified proposal that meets Downtown Design Review Requirements working with the HPO for compliance.
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Recommended Motion

Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the submitted 2 design options by BPAC of the “Aspen Niche” a Public Space/Art Installation located at the south edge of Parcel Number 100-19-002 with final design chosen by BPAC.

INTENT

The purpose of the Downtown Overlay is to review the appropriateness of proposed changes to historic buildings with guidance by the Design Handbook for Downtown Flagstaff: *“This handbook is included as a guide to the Commission in making consistent decisions on the appropriateness of proposed changes. Interpretation should be neither overly strict nor too permissive. In making its decisions, the Commission will consider the historic value of the building, its prominence and significance to the district, the state of physical deterioration, and the economic factors of repair, replacement, or renovation.”*

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards are incorporated into reviews by reference.

10-30.30.060 Development of a Landmark Property and Property within a Historic Overlay Zone, Process “C”: *“Prior to the granting of any required approvals or permits and prior to the commencement of any work on a landmark property or within a historic overlay zone, the Heritage Preservation Commission or the Historic Preservation Officer shall review all work proposed and approve or conditionally approve the work in the form of a certificate of no effect, certificate of appropriateness, or certificate of economic hardship”.*

Scope of Work

The Certificate of Appropriateness is applicable (Flagstaff Zoning Code 10-30.30.060E.) in the case of this property. The impact to the significance and integrity of surrounding historic properties and the compatibility with the approved design guidelines for the zone and nearby adjacent structures are a consideration for this level of review.

Required Findings for:

- E. Certification of Appropriateness.

1. Applicability. This approval is appropriate if the proposed work alters a cultural resource, but does so in such a way that is compatible with the historic or archaeological character of the resource and all major impacts are mitigated such that the work does not diminish, eliminate, or adversely affect the significance or integrity of the resource.

2. Criteria for Approval. When approving a certification of appropriateness, the Heritage Preservation Commission shall find that:

a. The proposed work is consistent with the purpose and intent of this division;

b. The proposed work is compatible with its context:

(1) The appropriate context for a landmark or a historic property is the property itself and, to a much lesser extent, the surrounding properties and neighborhood;

2) The appropriate context of work in a historic overlay zone is the significant portions of the property itself, the surrounding properties, and the neighborhood;

c. The cultural resources associated with the proposed work have been sufficiently sought, identified, and evaluated;

d. Major impacts on cultural resources are sufficiently mitigated; and

e. The proposed work is consistent with applicable development standards and design guidelines. See also subsection (G) of this section, Development Standards and Guidelines.

G. Development Standards and Guidelines. The following standards and guidelines apply to all approvals granted pursuant to this section:

1. City Code, Title 10, Zoning Code. The Heritage Preservation Commission and the Historic Preservation Officer shall apply the development standards and guidelines provided in Section [10-30.60.050](#), Compatibility, as criteria for determining the appropriateness of a development proposal.

2. Industry Standards and Guidelines.

b. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.*

c. *Preservation Briefs* and other similar best practice documents published by the National Park Service.

3. Zone-Specific Development Standards and Guidelines. These standards and guidelines are available from the Planning Section.

a. *Design Handbook for Downtown Flagstaff (1997)*;

Downtown Historic Overlay Design Guidelines

"The Downtown Overlay (DOZ) zone applies to areas of the City subject to the Downtown Historic Design Review Overlay District Guidelines and Design Standards and Guidelines with design review by the Heritage Preservation Commission for the development of properties located within the boundaries of the zone." (Flagstaff Zoning Code 10-40.50.030 Overlay Zones). **DO**. The Downtown Overlay (DO) zone applies to areas of the City subject to the Design Handbook for Downtown Flagstaff for the development of properties located within the boundaries of the zone.

a. The requirements of the DO zone are intended to promote the preservation and unique character of all structures within the zone.

The following design guidelines apply to this case:

Design Handbook for Downtown Flagstaff: “Rehabilitation Guidelines for all Existing Buildings” and “Special Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings”

- SD1 – Maintain the alignment of buildings at the sidewalk edge.
- SD3 Plan parking lots so that the visual impact of large paved areas is reduced.

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties – Rehabilitation

The applicable Standards for Rehabilitation are 9 & 10

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. 10. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10-30.60.050 Compatibility

Compatibility is important to ensure that the characteristics of different uses, activities or designs allow them to be located near or adjacent to each other in a harmonious manner. Compatibility does not mean “the same as.” Rather, it refers to how well a new development is sensitive to the character of existing development. The following basic design elements shall be considered when assessing the compatibility of a new development project which is subject to approval of a conditional use permit or for which a Zoning Map amendment is requested relative to adjacent existing development:

10-30.60.050 Compatibility considers A. Patterns of Development; B Scale; C. Continuity further described in greater detail within 10-30.60.050.

DISCUSSION

COMMUNICATION BACKGROUND

This property is a city funded project initiated by BPAC with some early discussions with the HPO.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

The Certificate of Appropriateness appears to be the correct review for this installation within the Downtown Historic Overlay Zone as an installation that is not reflective of historic building forms but can be generally considered as an art installation and the development of a public space.

HISTORIC ERA INTEGRITY

The Heritage Preservation Officer Mark Reavis, AICP, NCARB has reviewed the adjacent properties, the proposed project is not attached or impacting the adjacent properties physically.

ARCHITECTURAL DISCRIPTION & HISTORY: Parking lot -NA

PROPOSED CHANGES

The proposed changes are to replace the existing chain-link fence and gate with the new public space art

infill that utilizes 2 parking lot stalls (leased from Century Link) facing the north sidewalk of Aspen Ave and develop a public space/art installation featuring bicycle parking that still maintains gate access into the companies secured lot.

DESIGN CRITERA

The review of the submission looks at “compatibility” (10-30.60.050) design criteria for a new public space infill that does not significantly impact adjacent structure. Design criteria is supported by the Downtown Handbook Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior Standards

Basis of Report:

The information in this summary report was derived from the application to the Heritage Preservation Commission that included the design renderings included and funded by BPAC. Downtown Overlay review most often include the Flagstaff Zoning Code 10-30.30, and the Downtown Historic Design Review Overlay District Requirements utilized, noting the Design Handbook for Downtown Flagstaff and Federal US Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines and other relevant Historic Preservation Resources. This project required an additional focus of an evaluation of design “compatibility” (10-30.60.050) with the introduction of a new design art element that is not replicating historic forms.

10-30.60.050 Compatibility

A. **Patterns of Development.** Patterns of development include characteristics such as the streetscape, site relationships, signage, and landscape features. 1. **Streetscape.** The streetscape of a property includes the nature and character of the street, alleys, crossings, sidewalks, walls, fences, bicycle racks, street furniture, light fixtures, landscaping, signage, and other features. Neighborhoods often have similar and consistent streetscapes. 2. **Site Relationships.** This refers to the similarity of arrangement of structures relative to the street, each other, and adjacent properties, including similar setbacks, distances between buildings, lot coverage, open space or yards, parking and vehicle access patterns, and pedestrian access patterns. 4. **Landscaping Features.** Plantings and ornamental features shall continue that of the context and should not obscure or cover significant architectural details or features. The extent of landscaping shall be consistent with that of the context area.

B. **Scale.** Scale refers to similar or harmonious proportions, especially overall height and width, but also includes the visual intensity of the development, the building massing, and the shapes and sizes of the various design elements, such as the windows and doors. 1. **Height.** Respecting the overall existing height of a resource is critical to prevent new work from dominating existing work. 2. **Proportions.** Traditional structures commonly have established proportions for various parts of the structure and for the arrangement of the parts. The specific proportions can vary depending on specific architectural solutions, but the existing proportions shall be observed. 3. **Building Massing.** Massing refers to the volumes and sub-volumes that make up the entire structure. Larger structures can typically be made more compatible with smaller structures by carefully breaking up the building massing into smaller sub-volumes, creating the appearance of a grouping of small structures.

C. **Continuity.** Continuity encompasses patterns of development and scale, but also characteristics such as site development, building forms, textures, materials, details, and colors. 1. **Site Development.** The development of sites includes paving, pedestrian access, walls, fences, light fixtures,

open space or yards, landscaping, signage, and other elements. Similarity or cohesiveness in basic design elements for buildings and structures is required for compatible site design. 2. **Building Forms.** Building forms, including roof forms, commonly have some variation. New development shall be in harmony with or use the predominant forms of the context area. 3. **Texture.** Texture refers to the surface quality of structures, especially the shadow patterns. Shadows are traditionally created by the surface materials themselves having some dimension, but also by adding architectural details such as trims and ornaments and recessing of windows and doors. Traditional structures commonly have changes in the surface materials to create shadow patterns, commonly with rougher textures placed lower on the structure. 4. **Materials.** Materials make up and cover the surface of a structure and include the various structural and architectural details, trims, and ornaments, as well as foundations, walls, decking, and roofing. New development shall use or be in harmony with the predominant materials of the context area. 5. **Details.** Structural and architectural details shall be designed so as to make new work appear similar to existing work. Modern details, often needed by modern building codes, should be obscured, or designed to minimize visual obtrusiveness. 6. **Colors.** Color choice provides one of the best opportunities to enhance cohesiveness. Color schemes shall be developed in accordance with the specific architecture and the context area. In general, restraint should be used in the number of colors. Body colors should be subtle, and trim colors should provide contrast or definition to the body color. Natural materials, such as masonry and wood shingles, should not be painted.

NOTE: Though these “compatibility” requirements are usually applied to new buildings their application is appropriate to the site development of a public space.

Evaluation of Effects

The proposed public space/art infill project was evaluated for compliance with the design reviews provisions of the Downtown Overlay Design Handbook, Secretary of the Interior Standards and Guidelines as well as with an emphasis on “Compatibility” in 10-30.60.050. The project meets Compatibility requirements in Patterns of Development, Scale and Continuity as well the design standards of the Downtown Overlay and the Secretary of the Interior Standards and requirements of Heritage Preservation 10-30.30

The infill design’s dominate feature is a panelized backing fence of rusted core-ten steel with punched out patterns of various natural motifs. A penalized gate of the same motifs retains access to the companies secured lot. Panels are supported by painted steel posts. The public space defined has a stamper & stained herringbone brick pattern and natural concrete. The design feature art form bike-racks that define the space for bicycle parking.

The design touches upon compatibility in patterns of development, Scale and Continuity of Downtown public spaces and sidewalk enhanced infrastructure vs. references to buildings/structures and their compatibility. In evaluating the public space and similar street features the project does not have an adverse effect on the historic character of the downtown and greatly enhances the appearance of a parking lot within the context of Flagstaff’s Downtown.

Consideration of past Overlays

Staff has looked toward past reviews in the Downtown Overlay and found similar situations such as Heritage Square and various street enhancements.