



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary

Z-175-24-6

Date of VPC Meeting	April 9, 2025
Request From	C-2
Request To	C-2 HP
Proposal	Historic Preservation Overlay for Hansen Mortuary
Location	Northwest corner of 7th Street and Las Palmaritas Drive
VPC Recommendation	Approval, per the staff recommendation
VPC Vote	10-0

VPC DISCUSSION:

Two members of the public registered in support of this item, both wishing to speak.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Kevin Weight, staff, stated that he was presenting in his capacity as a staff member with the City's Historic Preservation Office, and as a representative for the applicant, which in this case is the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Weight oriented the Committee to the site and provided a brief background. Mr. Weight referenced a book titled *Midcentury Marvels*, which was published by the City in 2011 and included historically relevant sites dating from 1945 to 1975, including Hansen Mortuary. Mr. Weight stated that at the time of the book's publication, Hansen Mortuary was identified as a potential historic property for both the Phoenix Register as well as the National Register. Mr. Weight stated there was no activity regarding the historic status of Hansen Mortuary until September of 2024, at which time the Sunnyslope Historical Society approached the City about placing a historical designation on the property. Mr. Weight stated that the property owner signed the necessary forms, including the Proposition 207 Waiver, allowing the Historic Preservation Commission to initiate the rezoning process on October 21, 2024.

Mr. Weight displayed an image depicting the proposed zoning of the site stating that proposed zoning would only add the Historic Preservation Overlay to the site, and that the underlying C-2 zoning would remain intact. Mr. Weight stated that the site would be officially recognized on the Phoenix Register. Mr. Weight outlined the eligibility criteria needed to obtain the Historic Preservation Overlay, those being related to the site's age, integrity, and significance, and discussed how the site met all of the

criteria. Mr. Weight reiterated the site's size, location, and historic significance, and stated staff is recommending approval with no stipulations. Mr. Weight stated the Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval on March 17, 2025, and referenced letters of support.

QUESTIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE

Committee Member Gabriel Jaramillo asked if the pavement adjacent to the site was included in the evaluation of the site or its historic designation. **Mr. Weight** stated that even though the zoning boundary extends to the centerline of the street, the pavement was not a consideration. Mr. Weight stated that the evaluation of the property was typically limited to the building itself.

Committee Member Steve Pamperin asked if there were any other historic buildings in Phoenix that were designed by the same architect as the one that designed the Hansen building. **Mr. Weight** stated that he had heard of the architect's name before but was unaware if any of his buildings were currently included in the Register. Mr. Weight stated that the architect was active in the 1960's and that the City is preparing a survey of other religious properties, and suspects the architect's name would come up.

Committee Member Massio Sommacampagna asked if the Historic Preservation Overlay protected any landscaping. **Mr. Weight** stated that it did not necessarily protect landscaping since the Historic Preservation Overlay was intended to look at the exterior of the building; however, they would consider it if the landscaping was historically significant. Mr. Weight stated they would encourage to the extent reasonable the preservation of historic landscaping. Committee Member Sommacampagna asked what would happen if there was an aged tree on the property. Mr. Weight stated they would work with the City's Forestry Supervisor to try to protect the tree and gave examples of the Ash and Alder trees on Central Avenue and the large palm trees that line the streets in some of the older neighborhoods.

Committee Member Patrick Edwards asked if there was ever an effort towards the restoration of historic properties. **Mr. Weight** stated that the Hansen building had not changed drastically over time and that the various additions that occurred had not affected the property's historical integrity. Mr. Weight provided an example of a property on Van Buren Street where the owner approached the City about a Historic Overlay. Mr. Weight stated that the City did not realize the site was potentially historic since the façade had been covered over; however, the interior of the building was intact. Mr. Weight stated the City was able to provide grant money that allowed the owner to remove the stucco from the exterior and expose its original façade.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bonnie Bartak stated that she was from the Stoney Mountain Neighborhood Association, which is approximately one mile from the site. Ms. Bartak stated that the Hansen family provided a presentation to the association and that the association prepared a statement, which Ms. Bartak read into the record as follows: "The Hansen Mortuary is located a few blocks from the Stoney Mountain Neighborhood

Association, an area of about 400 residences, positioned between 14th Street, Highway 51, Northern Avenue, and Stoney Mountain. Our association has reviewed the proposed Hansen Mortuary application for Historic Preservation Overlay. We support the Hansen property application and believe it to meet the criteria for historic designation. We support this and the staff recommendation and analysis stating the property has unique architectural features, and the business and family have played a significant role in the growth and development of the Sunnyslope area for more than 50 years. The Hansen family, as morticians, served the needs of many thousands of Phoenix families since the business was founded in the late 40's, and the applicant operated there since the early 60's. The family also contributed importantly to the charitable and ethical needs of the Sunnyslope community over the years. The mortuary chapel presents a fine example of mid-century modern architecture with its dramatic roofline, diamond-shaped windows, open block screening, and native rock façade. Altogether, the building is one of the very few architecturally unique structures in Sunnyslope, built more than 60 years ago. Hansen Mortuary is unique and has a location of north 7th Street and stands as something of a landmark on what is probably the most traveled street in Sunnyslope. For these reasons, the Stoney Mountain Neighborhood Association encourages the North Mountain Village Planning Committee to endorse the HP Overlay Zoning for the Hansen Mortuary." Ms. Bartak further stated that she served on former Mayor Goddard's staff when the idea for a historic preservation program was first being considered and that the program has since enjoyed great success. Ms. Bartak stated that she was pleased to see the Hansen property being considered for historic preservation.

Julia Taggart stated that Hansen Mortuary has been a staple in the community for decades and has sponsored almost every Sunnyslope Highschool yearbook from 1954 to present. Ms. Taggart stated that Hansen Mortuary supported SlopeFest, and there were many beautiful comments on social media regarding the site and how much the Hansen family means to the community. Ms. Taggart stated that Hansen Mortuary recently celebrated their 75th Anniversary and had remained family-owned for that entire time. Ms. Taggart stated that three mid-modern-century commercial properties remain in Sunnyslope and complimented the Hansen family for their efforts.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Committee Member Jaramillo asked again about the pavement adjacent to the site and asked if there could be a stipulation attached to the case that would protect the existing pavement. **Mr. Weight** stated that he would bring the matter to his superiors but it was unlikely that such a stipulation would be attached.

Committee Member Bill Adams thanked the Hansen family for being present.

Committee Member Massio Sommacampagna asked why the term "Prop 207" is still being used given subsequent propositions with the same name. **Mr. Kuhfuss**, staff, stated that the term stuck when the proposition first passed and that likely every jurisdiction, planner, and land use attorney in the state still uses that terminology.

MOTION:

Committee Member Bill Adams motioned to recommend approval of Z-175-24-6 per the staff recommendation. **Committee Member Gabriel Jaramillo** seconded the motion.

VOTE:

10-0, motion to recommend approval of Z-175-24-6 per the staff recommendation passes with Committee Members Adams, Carmona, Edwards, Harris, Hepperle, Jaramillo, Pamperin, Sommacampagna, Matthews, and Fogelson in favor, and none opposed.

STAFF COMMENTS REGARDING VPC RECOMMENDATION:

None