



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD AGENDA
CITY HALL AUDITORIUM, 250 NORTH 5TH STREET
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2023 - 4:00 PM**

Call to Order/Announcements

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of Minutes of the January 3, 2023 Meeting

Discussion Items

1. Historic Designation of Plaza Urrutia Fronton
2. 2023 Activities
 - Decades Walking Tour May 13, 2023
 - Then and Now Photo Display
 - Teller Institute Most Endangered Places Nomination
 - Beehive Interpretive Signage

Updates

Other Business/Public Comment

Adjournment



Grand Junction Planning Commission

Regular Session

Item #1.

Meeting Date: February 7, 2023

Presented By:

Department: Community Development

Submitted By:

Information

SUBJECT:

Approval of Minutes of the January 3, 2023 Meeting

RECOMMENDATION:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND OR DETAILED INFORMATION:

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Attachments

1. Historic Preservation Board Minutes - 2023 - January 3

Historic Preservation Board Meeting

Minutes – January 3, 2023

Board Members Present: Vida Jaber, Sidney Wood, Ron Parron and Dave Fishell

Board Members Not Present: Christine Noel

Others in Attendance: Kristen Ashbeck, Principal Planner

Call to Order/Announcements

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by Chairman Ron Parron. Kristen announced that the Board is now functioning as a 5-member Board as allowed by City Code and bylaws.

Approval of Minutes

Dave Fishell moved to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2022 meeting. Sydney Wood seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Selection of 2023 Board Chair

The Board unanimously appointed Vida Jaber as the Board Chair for 2023.

Discussion Items

2023 Board Activities

Kristen had provided the Board with some ideas regarding activities the Board may be interested in, particularly during Historic Preservation Month. Those of most interest to the Board:

- Walking Tours
- Host an Open House(s) to show off a historic building that has been recently restored or is in need of restoration
- Collect “then and now” photos of your community and exhibit them in a public space such as a school or library
- Interpretive signage for the beehive
- Nomination to Colorado Most Endangered Places List for Teller Institute

The Board discussed combining the first two ideas into a tour of downtown buildings for Historic Preservation Day, tentatively for May 13, 2023 which coincides with National Train Day. The tour could be “Grand Junction through the Decades” with ideas for turn-of-the century – Railroad Depot; 1920s – Avalon Theatre; Stranges Store. The Board will identify a list of buildings that could be open and accessible for participants to view/tour.

Kristen will follow up with the owner of the depot and the Avalon as a start.

Kristen will contact the North Seventh Street Historic District to see if they will be having a walking tour in 2023.

Other Business/Public Comment

Ron Parron informed the Board of increased large truck traffic occurring on 7th Street which is not a designated truck route. Kristen will provide Ron with information for the next meeting when he could bring the issue up with City Manager.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 PM.



Grand Junction Planning Commission

Regular Session

Item #1.

Meeting Date: February 7, 2023

Presented By:

Department: Community Development

Submitted By:

Information

SUBJECT:

Historic Designation of Plaza Urrutia Fronton

RECOMMENDATION:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Consider an application by the City of Grand Junction and the Basque Community to designate the Plaza Urrutia Fronton in the City Register of Historic Sites, Structures and Districts. See attached Staff Report and Site Maps and Photographs

BACKGROUND OR DETAILED INFORMATION:

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Attachments

1. HPB Staff Report - Plaza Urrutia Designation
2. Urrutia Plaza PRAB letter of support 1 23 23
3. Plaza Urrutia Vicinity Map
4. Plaza Urrutia Designation Area Map
5. Site Photographs
6. Plaza Urrutia SR Eligibility Letter



Grand Junction Historic Preservation Board

Meeting Date: February 7, 2023
Presented By: Kristen Ashbeck, Principal Planner
Department: Community Development
Submitted By: Kristen Ashbeck, Principal Planner

SUBJECT

Consider a request to designate the Plaza Urrutia Fronton (Basque handball court) in the southwest portion of the property at 728 24 Road (Canyon View Park) in the City Register of Historic Sites, Structures and Districts

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the request.

BACKGROUND OR DETAILED INFORMATION

City Council adopted Section 21.07.040, Historic Preservation, in the Zoning and Development Code in 1994 which established a City Register of Historic Structures, Sites and Districts, to which eligible resources may be designated. The criteria by which the Historic Preservation Board and Council shall review a proposed designation are specified in the ordinance and are included in the Analysis section of this report. The purpose and effect of designation is: to assist local interests in preservation of physical structures, sites or districts and to recognize locally significant structures, sites or districts; to provide a mechanism to educate the public on local history, development of the community, architectural styles and housing and business development; to enable the owners of the property in the City to take advantage of historic preservation programs and opportunities; and to make all properties listed on the City Registry eligible for such incentive programs as may be developed.

Project Goals:

List the Plaza Urrutia Fronton (Basque Handball Court) in the City of Grand Junction Register of Historic Sites, Structures and Districts and ultimately the State Register of Historic Places.

General Information¹:

Historic Building Name: Plaza Urrutia Fronton (Basque Handball Court)

Current Owner Name and Address:

City of Grand Junction – Parks and Recreation Department
Canyon View Park
250 North 5th Street
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Date of Construction: 1978

Site History:

Originally built in 1978, in the backyard of Jean Urruty's small ranch, owned previously by farmer Leonard Long. The corner was sold to the City of Grand Junction for parks use by Bennie Urruty after her husband passed in 1984.

Refurbished in about 2003. New flooring poured, with walls reinforced and aligned for safety by Mays Construction of Grand Junction.

Landscaping around fronton was planted by citizens and cared for by municipal workers. The Handball Court corner was established and built out with amenities including a new picnic pergola from the City of Grand Junction. Planting areas were installed with shrubs and trees, including an oak tree gifted by Jean and Maggie Doyhenard, representing resilience and freedom for Basque immigrants and their families.

Road construction in 2021-22 erased a sizeable amount of greenspace in the Handball Court Corner's south end, but the structure continues to be sound and functional.

Historic designation will only include the concrete slab under the fronton, the fronton itself and the concrete sidewalks that encircle the fronton (see Site Map attached).

Historic Background:

The fronton was built in 1978, so Basques might play their favorite childhood game in this new place that became their home. Young Basque men found beautiful brides here, then brought their new little families to the court to play, laugh and eat the most amazing lamb imaginable. Sometimes Basque men just got together after Sunday Mass to play, eat and speak to each other in their native language. Those gatherings were soulful to watch, seeing Basques who immigrated originally to tend sheep on the Western Slope finding new ways to make their way here...creating a beautiful pocket of Basque culture in Western Colorado.

¹ General information, construction history and history taken from Preliminary Property Evaluation Form, prepared by Mona Dyer, 12/13/2022. Full PPE form on file at History Colorado and available at request.

The fronton was built out of necessity. Basque handball was played barehanded with a rubber ball that's hard as rock. Standard handball courts of the day were not robust enough to withstand the power delivered by a rubber ball batted by a barehanded Basque man. The Basque "Uncles" were asked to play somewhere else because their fun was wrecking everyone else's walls. As a result, Plaza Urrutia was born.

Jean and Bennie Urruty were gracious enough to make a home for the fronton. It was erected in the backyard of their farm... between a ranch house, a sheep lambing shed and silo if I recall. Basque Celebrations with traditional music & dancing, contests and amazing culinary delights took place on site. I have firsthand knowledge of at least one epic Basque wedding reception there ... with countless other get togethers celebrating the happiest and saddest days of our Basque families' lives. Small children's birthday parties, graduations, memorial remembrances ... the Handball Court is/was a place of Celebration or calm solace. After Jean passed in about 1984, Bennie eventually sold the corner lot to the City of Grand Junction to square up property originally owned by Leonard Long and sold to create Canyon View Park. The handball court corner was quiet for a time.

Plaza Urrutia was nearly lost once. In the early 2000's the structure was slated to be razed to make way for more parking for the bigger, more modern plans of a city park complex. Citizens stood behind the small Basque population and launched a fight that ultimately won City Council approval to preserve the Fronton. Citizens & businesses pitched in & worked together to reclaim and refurbish the corner to make it green and welcoming again. It became a place where anyone can play...where a Basque community proudly holds fond memories. An Oak Tree grows there, symbolizing the freedoms of Basque people.

In September 2022, Plaza Urrutia hosted a pelota exhibition. It turns out Plaza Urrutia is the only true Basque Fronton in Colorado. World class players representing the North American Basque Association (NABO) demonstrated their skills at the fronton in Grand Junction. Jean Urruty, the man who built the original handball court, was an early member of NABO.

Historic Significance:

The Plaza Urrutia Fronton is significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage for its association with the historic and continued presence of the Basque community in the City of Grand Junction and its association with Basque culture as a handball court and location where community and cultural events occurred.

Basque immigrant Jean Urruty, who was a founding member of the North American Basque Organization, built the fronton on his property so that Basque immigrants to the city would have a location to play handball, a game uniquely identified with Basque culture. Aside from being a location where handball was played, the Basque community used the Fronton as a location for gathering in celebration and participation in cultural

events including sharing food and speaking the Basque language. As such, the Fronton deftly conveys its significance as a location common to the Basque community.

Analysis

Pursuant to Section 21.07.040(f)(2) of the Zoning and Development Code, designation of a structure in the City Register of Historic Structures, Sites and Districts shall conform to the following criteria.

(1) Structures. Structures must be at least 50 years old and meet one or more of the architectural, cultural or geographic/environmental significance criteria. **A structure can be exempted from the age requirement if the Council finds it to be exceptionally important in other criteria.**

The Plaza Urrutia Fronton was constructed 45 years ago thus does not meet the first part of this criterion. However, the structure is a significant cultural site, representing the local and state-wide Basque community.

(i) Historic structures or sites shall meet one or more of the following areas of significance in order to be considered for designation.

(A) Architectural.

(B) Cultural

(C) Geographic/Environmental

The Plaza Urrutia Fronton is most significant under the Cultural criterion in that it is associated with a unique, underrepresented culture – the local and state-wide Basque populations.

Findings of Fact and Recommendation

After reviewing the request to designate the Plaza Urrutia Fronton (Basque handball court) in the southwest portion of the property at 728 24 Road (Canyon View Park) in the City Register of Historic Sites, Structures and Districts the following findings of fact have been made:

1. The request conforms with Section 21.07.040(f)(2) of the Zoning and Development Code.

Therefore, Staff recommends approval of the request.

SUGGESTED MOTION

Mr. Chairman, on the request to designate the Plaza Urrutia Fronton (Basque handball court) in the City Register of Historic Sites, Structures and Districts, City file number HIS-2023-59, located in the southwest portion of the property at 728 24 Road (Canyon View Park), I move that the Historic Preservation Board forward a recommendation of approval to City Council with the findings of fact as listed in the staff report.

January 15, 2023

City Historic Preservation Board
City Council

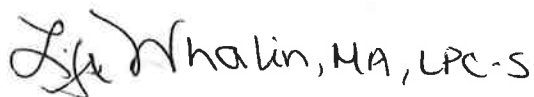
At our Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) meeting on January 5, 2023, Kristin Ashbeck, Principle Planner with the City of Grand Junction, presented information regarding the Plaza Urrutia Fronton.

History Colorado is interested in pursuing a historic designation of the Plaza Urrutia Fronton. In September a handball tournament was hosted at the plaza with world class players from the North American Basque Association, representing many states and even internally, in attendance. This is the only true Basque Fronton in Colorado. This structure is culturally significant to the Basque people and though, not yet 50 years old, would qualify for the register because of that cultural significance and as representation of an under-represented group.

A historical designation would open grant funding that supports interpretive signage, and maintenance to keep the facility in good repair. City of Grand Junction staff supports seeking this designation to acknowledge the cultural significance of this court and the Basque people.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) discussed this item in depth at our January 5th regular meeting. After lengthy discussion, PRAB voted unanimously to support the application to the City Historic Preservation Board and City Council for the historic designation of the Plaza in the City Register of Historic Sites as well as supporting an application to the State of Colorado Historic Places.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lisa Whalin, MA, LPC-S". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lisa Whalin, MA, LPC-S
PRAB Chairperson

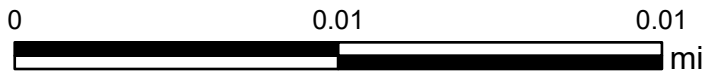
Plaza Urrutia Fronton Vicinity Map



0 0.13 0.25
mi

Printed: 1/23/2023
1 inch equals 376 feet
Scale: 1:4,514
Packet Page 11

Plaza Urrutia Fronton Historic Designation Area



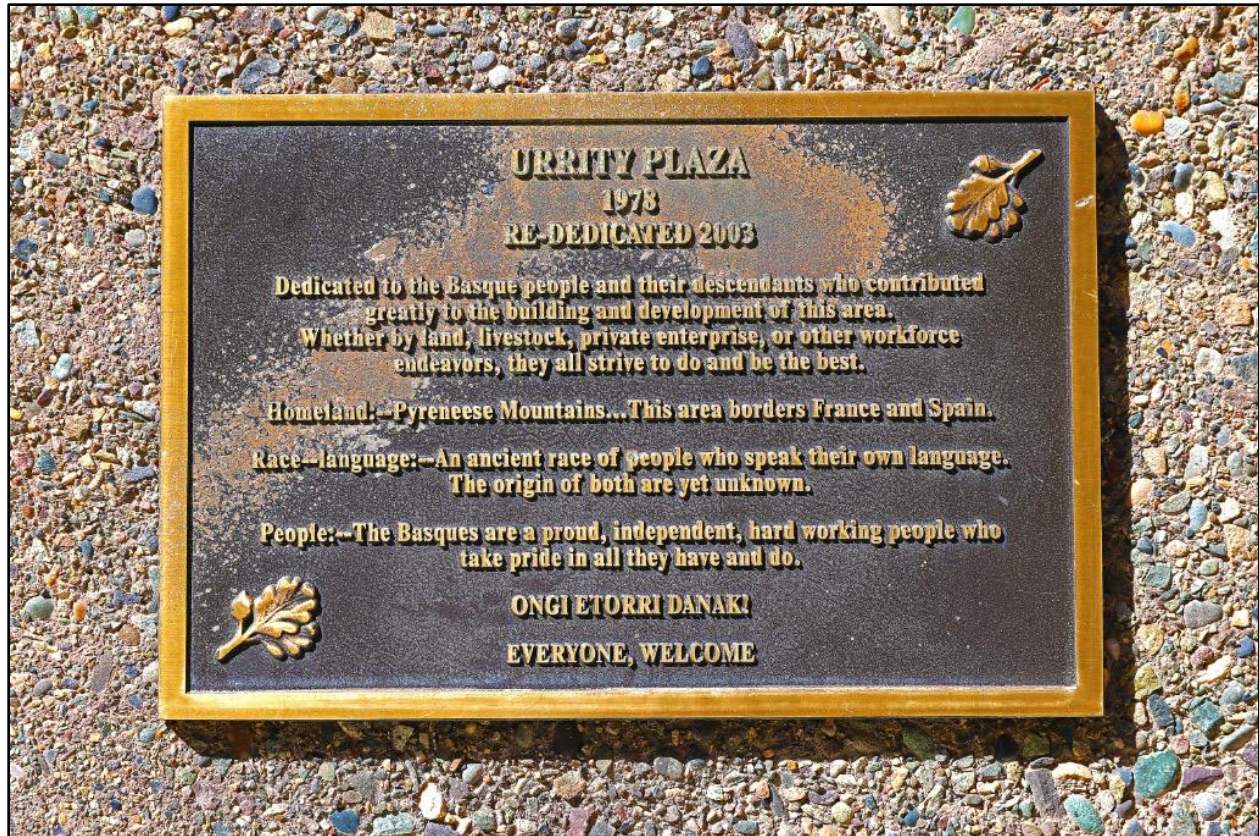
Printed: 1/23/2023
1 inch equals 24 feet
Scale: 1:282

Packet Page 12

Current Photographs:

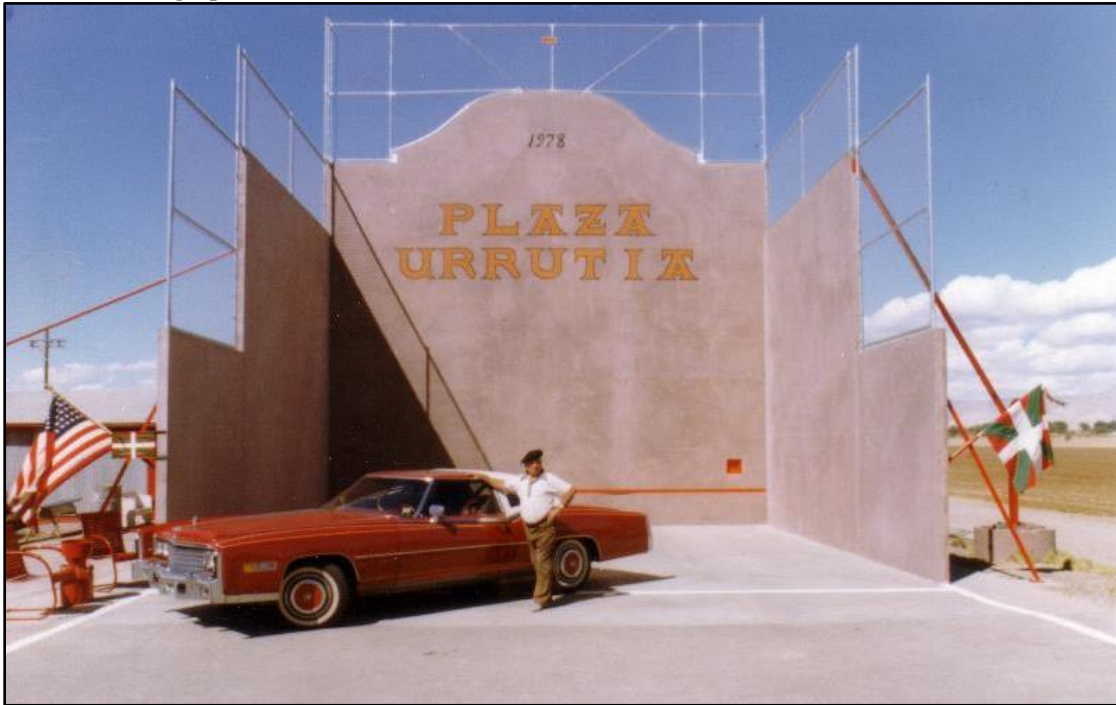








Historic Photographs:



Date of picture is 1978. Photographed is Jean Urruty, who is responsible for the construction of the Fronton in the same year.



December 30, 2022

Ms. Mona (Doyenhard) Dyer
2225 Broadway
Grand Junction, CO 81507

Re: Plaza Urrutia Fronton (site #5ME.24116), 250 North 5th Street, Grand Junction, Mesa County

Dear Ms. Dyer:

Based on the preliminary review by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, we have determined that the above named property appears to meet the criteria for evaluation and nomination to the State Register of Historic Properties under Criterion A for Ethnic Heritage (Other-Basque) from 1978-1992 as a place of cultural importance and expression associated with Basque community and people in Grand Junction.

If you wish to pursue nomination to the State Register, you may find the nomination and instructions on our website at: www.historycolorado.org/nomination-forms.

Once the completed nomination form and the other required materials are submitted to our office, we will review the forms for completeness and may suggest revisions to clarify and strengthen the nomination before its consideration by the State Review Board. The board currently meets three times each year. If the board approves the nomination, the State Historic Preservation Officer will review the nomination and then make a recommendation to the History Colorado/Colorado Historical Society Board of Directors for the State Register listing.

Our next Review Board meeting for which we are accepting nominations is scheduled for **May 20, 2023**. In order to process the nominations, make the required legal notifications, and submit your nomination to the Review Board, we need to have the completed nomination (with all items on the checklist) on or before **February 5, 2023**. If you need additional time, the following Review Board meeting will be in September 2023 with a draft nomination due in our office by June 5, 2023.

Should you have any questions regarding the nomination process, how to complete the nomination, or other concerns, please feel free to call me at 720.765.0562 or e-mail me at eric.newcombe@state.co.us. We appreciate your interest in historic preservation and look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Eric Newcombe
National and State Register Historian

Enclosure:



Grand Junction Planning Commission

Regular Session

Item #2.

Meeting Date: February 7, 2023
Presented By:
Department: Community Development
Submitted By:

Information

SUBJECT:

2023 Activities

- Decades Walking Tour May 13, 2023
- Then and Now Photo Display
- Teller Institute Most Endangered Places Nomination
- Beehive Interpretive Signage

RECOMMENDATION:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

BACKGROUND OR DETAILED INFORMATION:

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Attachments

None