

Why Broadway Village Should Save the Americana Apartments

First, I'd like to say that as a group, the Broadmoor Broadway Village Neighborhood loves Broadway Village. Many of us have dined at the restaurants many times, and we often meet there as a group. Falora offers a discount to those who walk or bike, and many of us walk there. My wife bought an electric bicycle at the Farmers Market. Many of us have attended Sunshine Mile events there. We want to see Broadway Village succeed. However, we disagree with Broadway Village's proposal to demolish the Americana Apartments, which as many of you know, sit at the corner of Manchester and Stratford, directly between Broadway Village and BBVNA. We think Broadway Village will be more successful if they save the Americana Apartments. Here's why:

Issue #1: The Americana Apartments are a beautiful example of late 1940's architecture in Tucson. Built in 1948, pointed north to face Broadway Village, built by an (at this time) unknown architect and builder, but so beloved by the first owner that he lived in them until the early 1960's. How often does that happen? Originally named "Los Nietos en La Mancho" Apartments to tie them to the Spanish Colonial style Broadway Village shopping center. Construction details include: Mexican tile, glass block, exposed wood beam ceilings, floor to ceiling glass, and built-in ceramic fireplaces. You can't build like this today - for example, wood beams like this are no longer commercially available.



Issue #2: The Americana Apartments provide a natural buffer between the Broadmoor Broadway Village neighborhood and the late noise and hubub at Sushi Garden Restaurant, which is currently open until midnight on weekends, and Sidecar, which is open until 11 pm. The mature landscaping to the south of the apartments reinforces this buffer. Remove the apartments and the mature landscaping, and noise levels will increase. Car headlights pointed at the neighborhood at midnight do not a tranquil neighborhood make.



Issue #3: Broadway Village needs additional parking. However, surrounding Broadway Village with additional asphalt will remove some of the charm that bring customers to this location. Broadway Village provides a shady respite, the classic look of a Spanish town, designed by Josias Joessler and built by John Murphey in 1939 as the first shopping center outside of downtown. Surrounding buildings with massive parking lots doesn't make them more popular - just look at the TCC.

Issue #4: For many of these reasons, the Broadmoor Broadway Village Neighborhood overwhelmingly voted to save the Americana Apartments at their December 2013 neighborhood meeting, in one of the most well-attended meetings in years. The BBVNA Board is also on record as opposing the demolition of the apartments. Residents of the Americana Apartments are residents of BBVNA.



The argument in favor of demolishing the Americana Apartments runs like this: Broadway Village needs parking, and the Americana Apartments are too old to maintain. Broadway Village does need additional parking, but there are alternatives that haven't even begun to be explored. Just one possibility: Broadway Village or its tenants could provide incentives to employees who bike, walk, or take transit. And take a look at the pictures: does it look to you like the Americana Apartments are beyond restoration? The Americana Apartments were built in the same year as my house on Arroyo Chico. Is my house too old to restore? I certainly don't think so - I plan to live here for many more years. Once the Americana Apartments are gone, we can't change our minds. Maintaining old buildings

is more expensive than demolishing them, but demolition eliminates the possibility of other uses for them, and the Americana Apartments are an income property. The money that it will take to demolish and haul away the Americana Apartments could be used to build agreements with the owners of neighboring parking lots for both employee and valet parking.

Finally, at the meeting at the Ward 6 City Council offices on Wednesday, June 25, we learned that the owners of the Americana Apartments "could not guarantee" that they will allow the lovely mesquite tree at the corner of Manchester and Stratford to live. This is a sad state of affairs when we've begun to think of the existence of large trees as a health and safety issue for pedestrians during the summer heat.



By Richard Roati, BBVNA First Vice President

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