

Letter to Editor

## **Are Taos building design standards feel-good with no teeth?**

**KEN MANNING**, *Taos*

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Dear Mayor Barrone and Councilmembers: Attached is my critique of the proposed Holiday Inn Express. My primary concern is the design. This is the first time the Council has been called on to interpret and apply the revised Design Standards and associated massing requirements.

This is a huge precedent. It will let the community know whether the Council was serious about the design of new buildings in Taos or whether it was just a feel-good exercise with no teeth.

The Design Standards contain some general language, some subjectivity. They are open to a degree of interpretation. They challenge the architect to be creative.

I have no architectural background. My opinion is perhaps no more or less valid as to whether the Holiday Inn meets the requirements than yours. That is why I repeatedly call for a review and critique of the plans by an independent, objective architect. To date that has not happened. As a result, you are functioning as an Architectural Review Commission. You are probably not comfortable in that role. The Planning and Zoning Commission clearly was not.

If an objective, independent architect gives a strong endorsement of compliance I will certainly acquiesce to their findings. Without such an analysis, a Council decision is purely political, not one based on the merits. Certainly, you have the power to make a purely political decision. I urge you to rise above that.