

Development Services

From Concept to Construction

Phone: 503-823-7300 Email: bds@portlandoregon.gov 1900 SW 4th Ave, Portland, OR 97201

More Contact Info (<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/519984>)



APPEAL SUMMARY

Status: Hold for Additional Information

Appeal ID: 15402	Project Address: 1444 SE Hawthorne Blvd
Hearing Date: 7/19/17	Appellant Name: Caitlin Lewis
Case No.: B-022	Appellant Phone: (303) 514-0984
Appeal Type: Building	Plans Examiner/Inspector: Preliminary
Project Type: commercial	Stories: 1 Occupancy: E (Mixed use building) Construction Type: V-B
Building/Business Name: Mad Genius Escapes	Fire Sprinklers: No
Appeal Involves: other: Occupant Load	LUR or Permit Application No.:
Plan Submitted Option: pdf [File 1] [File 2] [File 3]	Proposed use: Escape Games

APPEAL INFORMATION SHEET

Appeal item 1

Code Section	2014 OSSC, Section 1004, Occupant Load
Requires	Determination of occupant load by dividing square footage by occupant load factor, resulting in a total of 70 occupants and a classification of Group A occupancy.
Proposed Design	Determination of occupant load by actual maximum occupants allowed by the business, resulting in a total of 27 occupants and a classification of Group B occupancy.
Reason for alternative	While building code dictates a higher occupant load, the business sets strict limits of 8 players per game. With three games, and a lobby and office for 3 staff members, this means there would never be more than 27 occupants in the space. We request an occupant load rating that more accurately reflects the actual use of the building. Please see our supplemental information for more details.

APPEAL DECISION

Reduction in occupant load based on actual proposed use: Hold for additional information.

Appellant may contact John Butler (503-823-7339) with questions.



City of Portland
Bureau of Development Services
Building Appeal Supplemental Form
Mad Genius Escapes, LLC

Through this appeal, we are requesting to use the actual occupant load for our new business, rather than what is determined by code. Because of the nature of our business, there will be far fewer actual occupants in our building than the occupant load that would be determined by code. In fact, the way we run the business sets a distinct maximum number of occupants, as evidenced by our business plan.

In order to explain our appeal, we'd like to describe several aspects of our business. The escape game industry is the fastest-growing medium for group entertainment over the last 3 years. In our escape games, teams of up to 8 players solve puzzles, follow clues, and work together to complete a combination of mental challenges within 60 minutes. All of the games are well-lit, family-friendly, and closely monitored; none are claustrophobic or threatening in any way. Each team has a designated "cluemaster," an employee who guides each group through the game, watching on closed-circuit cameras, answering any questions and making sure it is a fun experience for all involved.

Each game can consist of a single room, or multiple connected rooms. Although there are 6 "rooms" in at our facility (not including storage, bathrooms, lobby, or office), there are only three "games." Each game has a maximum of 8 players at a time, and it is very rare to have all three games occupied simultaneously. Our online booking system will only allow customers to book up to 8 players per game and only one game is offered every 40 minutes (*see **Business Plan, Projections.***) When we are fully booked, 2 teams of 8 will overlap and up to 3 employees will be in the building, for a total of 19 occupants. At special request, we can accommodate larger team-building events. However, even at maximum capacity, we would have 8 players in each of our 3 games and up to 3 employees, for a maximum load of 27 occupants (*as noted in the **Business Plan, under Products and Services.***)

Cluemasters will spend the majority of their time in the office and lobby. Players will check in with their cluemaster and pass through the lobby on the way to their game, but will not spend a substantial amount of time there (5 - 10 minutes in most cases). All in all, our average use of the space will be between 5 - 15 occupants, with infrequent events resulting in occupancies as high as, but not exceeding 27 persons at a time.



Contacts

Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can provide any further information. We appreciate your time.

Mad Genius Escapes

Caitlin Lewis (Co-Owner)

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Peter Lewis (Co-Owner)

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General Contractor

Gary Edmark

BnK Construction

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Plans and Permitting

Darin Bouska

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Building Owner

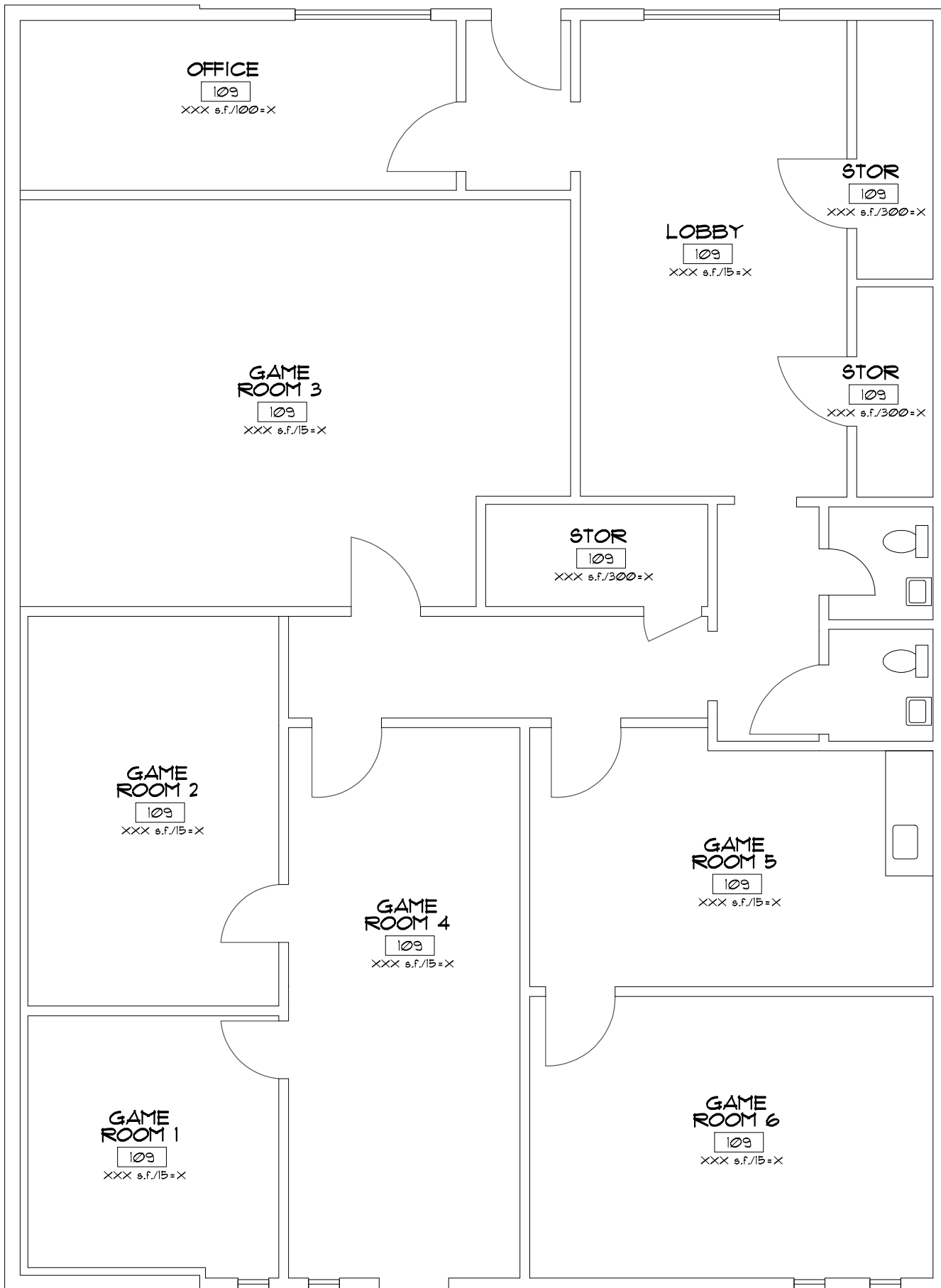
Vicki Biornstad and William Stewart

In care of PDX Metro

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ROOMS ARE LABELED APPLICABLE TO THE PROPOSED USE AND APPLICABLE LOAD FACTOR, PER CURRENT CODE. WE ARE PROPOSING THAT THE 'ACTUAL' OCCUPANT LOAD BE ALLOWED TO BE USED, RATHER THAN WHAT IS DETERMINED BY CODE.



Business Plan

Summary

Business Description

Mad Genius Escapes is an escape room game: an immersive team-building and recreational activity that is growing rapidly in popularity in the United States. Escape rooms have been popular across Asia and Europe for over ten years; the first escape room business in the United States opened in 2012.

Mad Genius Escapes in Portland, Oregon will have three innovative escape rooms, unduplicated anywhere in the world. Each room will have a unique story and set of puzzles interwoven into the narrative and set. Players work together to solve all of the puzzles in the room before their allotted one hour time runs out.

Products and Services

The main source of revenue for Mad Genius Escapes will be the escape room activities themselves. With three unique rooms accommodating up to 8 players each, we will have the capacity to serve groups as large as 24 players at a time. Games will be available every 40 minutes from 1pm to 9pm, and we will be open six days per week.

We will also develop merchandise specific to each room theme so that customers might purchase a memento to remember their experience. We anticipate that sales from merchandise will comprise about 3% of total revenue.

Market Research

The escape room industry has expanded rapidly across the United States, especially over the past

two years. There are several escape businesses in Portland, but the market still has ample room for growth. Denver, for example, currently has 18 escape rooms for a metro area of 2.8 million, while Portland has 13 rooms for a comparable metro population of 2.4 million. The average cost of an hour-long escape room experience in Portland is \$32/person. Mad Genius Escapes will charge \$28/player. Many of our main competitors in Portland are only open on the weekends and most can only accommodate up to 16 players at a time. Mad Genius Escapes will be open six days a week, from 1pm to 9pm, and will be able to accommodate 24 players at a time. Thus, we expect to attract a majority of larger groups from offices and businesses in the area seeking team-building activities.

Operations

Management Team

Mad Genius Escapes in Portland will be co-owned by Caitlin Lewis and Peter Lewis. We will design and build the game rooms and be in charge of hiring and managing staff. Day-to-day operations will be run by one full-time General Manager and two full-time Cluemasters. The Cluemasters will facilitate each escape room experience; they will also be trained to answer phones, schedule games and team-building activities, and perform routine maintenance on game props and sets. The General Manager will manage staff and scheduling, and will be trained to problem-solve larger issues. Caitlin Lewis will remain available throughout the term of the lease to help manage the business, hire new staff, and perform other ownership duties.

Leadership

Caitlin Lewis, Co-Owner

Caitlin has a BA in Philosophy from Washington University in St. Louis and 10 years of experience in recreation. Passionate about the field of recreation, she has had the privilege of working as a camp counselor for Easter Seals Rocky Mountain Village, a certified low ropes course team-building instructor, a backpacking trip leader, an adaptive recreation specialist, and an art teacher. She co-designed the four Escape Rooms at Epic Escape Game Englewood and ran the business together with Peter Lewis for its first nine months.

Peter Lewis, Co-Owner

Peter studied Computer Science and Math at Yale, with a focus in computer graphics and fractal geometry. After graduating, he worked as a programmer at SoundSpectrum, creators of the world's best-selling music visualization software. Since 2015, he has worked as the co-designer and owner of Epic Escape Game Englewood, one of the most successful and well-reviewed escape rooms in Colorado.

Financial

Sales and Marketing

The majority of marketing will be done through our website and Facebook page. At the end of each day, Cluemasters will post photos of each group holding playful signs and props. These photos are shared widely on social media and spread the word about the games quickly. We will also post regular game teasers, weekly riddles, and other information of interest to our target demographics on our Facebook page. In addition, our customer research shows that the great majority of players choose to visit a location based on reviews from Google, Yelp, and TripAdvisor. Providing quality rooms and service, and requesting reviews on these sites, will help us gain prominence and brand recognition among other escape rooms.

Projections

With 13 timeslots per day, 27 days per month, and 8 players per game, there are a maximum of 2,808 players per month, or 33,696 players per year. Using a starting occupancy rate of 25%, and expecting 5% growth per year, we formulate the following projections:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Players	8,424	8,845	9,287	9,752	10,239
Game Revenue	\$235,872	\$247,660	\$260,036	\$273,056	\$286,692
Merchandise	\$7,076	\$7,430	\$7,801	\$8,192	\$8,601
Total Revenue	\$242,948	\$255,090	\$267,837	\$281,248	\$295,293
Expenses	\$182,568	\$149,696	\$157,181	\$165,040	\$173,292
Profit	\$60,380	\$105,393	\$110,655	\$116,207	\$122,000