



## Historic Preservation Board Staff Report

**DATE:** September 5, 2023

**TO:** Historic Preservation Board

**THROUGH:** Natalie Lewis, Deputy City Manager  
Nana Appiah, PhD, AICP, Development Services Director  
Mary Kopaskie-Brown, AICP, OPPI, CIP, Planning Director

**FROM:** Rachel Nettles, Assistant Planning Director

**SUBJECT:** Mesa Zoning Ordinance text amendments (Historic Preservation) - Proposed amendments to Chapters 23, 44, 74, and 87 of the Mesa City Code

### **PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION:**

The Planning Division recommends that the Historic Preservation Board provide a recommendation that the City Council adopt the proposed Mesa Zoning Ordinance Historic Preservation text amendments.

### **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

Mesa adopted the first Historic Preservation Ordinance as part of Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) in 1994 with subsequent updates in 1997 and the early 2000's. Current regulations can be found in four different sections of the MZO. Amendments to the MZO that are proposed focus on: (1) clarifying requirements and processes; (2) establishing procedures where none exist; and (3) ensuring consistency amongst all Historic Preservation provisions.

In 2019, the Historic Preservation Office received a grant from the National Parks Service to update the MZO and the related *2001 Historic Homes of Mesa: An Architectural and Preservation Guide*. The proposed changes to the MZO (MZO Text Amendments) create more user-friendly provisions that are easier to find, use, understand, and implement. The MZO Text Amendments are being presented for consideration at the same time as the Mesa Historic Preservation Design Guidelines (2023 Update).

Details of the MZO Text Amendments are attached to this report as Exhibit 1 (Historic Preservation Text Amendments). The specific affected chapters are Chapters 23, 44, 66, 74, and 87 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO).

The MZO Text Amendments will, in pertinent part: (1) Consolidate historic preservation standards in Chapter 23 (Historic and Landmark Overlay Districts) and Chapter 44 (Historic Signs) into Chapter 74( Historic Districts and Historic Landmark Procedures); (2) Provide definitions for previously undefined terms; (3) Establish standards for the required maintenance of designated historic resources; and (4) Provide an expedited Certificate of

Appropriateness review process for emergency repairs.

**SUMMARY OF TEXT AMENDMENTS AND EXPLANATION:**

**1) Consolidate historic preservation standards in Chapter 23 (Historic and Landmark Overlay Districts) and Chapter 44 (Historic Signs) into Chapter 74: Historic Districts and Historic Landmark Procedures**

Currently, Mesa’s historic preservation zoning provisions exist in three different sections of the MZO.

- Chapter 23: Historic and Landmark Overlay Districts discusses the purpose of the Mesa Historic Property Register, outlines the process and criteria for Historic District and Landmark designation, and discusses demolition permits as they relate to historic properties.
- Chapter 44: Historic Signs addresses the eligibility of historic signs, the designation process, and the restoration, maintenance, and repair of historic signs.
- Chapter 74: Historic Districts and Historic Landmark Procedures discusses the designation process for historic districts and landmarks, Certificates of Appropriateness, and Demolition Permits.

Several historic preservation related topics are addressed in multiple places within the MZO; with the MZO Text Amendments, they have been combined into Chapter 74 and re-organized to remove duplicative information and increase user-friendliness by locating all historic preservation provisions in one place.

**2) Provide definitions for previously undefined terms**

To further increase the user friendliness of the MZO, definitions for Historic District, Historic Landmark, Historic Preservation Overlay, Historic Sign and Historic Preservation Officer were added to Chapter 87 (Definitions).

Historic District: Building(s), structure(s), object(s), or site(s) which contain a concentration, linkage, or continuity of cultural resources which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by a plan or physical development.

Historic Landmark: Any building(s), structure(s), object(s), or site(s) that is an exceptional example of the historical, archaeological, cultural, architectural, community, aesthetic, or artistic heritage of the City.

Historic Preservation Overlay: A zoning designation that is used in conjunction with an underlying zoning district and includes regulations for a Historic Landmark or Historic District to preserve the historical significance of building(s), structure(s), object(s), or site(s). For the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance, Historic Preservation Overlay means a Historic Preservation Overlay that has been approved by City Council unless specified as a proposed Historic Preservation Overlay.

Historic Sign: A sign that meets the criteria for establishment outlined in Section 11-74-5(D) of the Zoning Ordinance and has been approved by the Historic Preservation Board.

Historic Preservation Officer: The City Staff, as designated by the City Manager or their designee, that administers the Historic Preservation program, provides support to the Historic Preservation Board, manages the Historic Landmark and Historic District designations and the Certificate of Appropriateness process.

### **3) Additional Clarifications**

#### ***A. Establish standards for the required maintenance of designated historic resources.***

Currently, owners of property with a Historic Preservation Overlay are required to maintain their property in accordance with MZO Chapter 6 (Public Nuisances, Property Maintenance, Neighborhood Preservation and Animal Regulations); however, maintenance provisions specific to historic resources do not exist.

A provision is being proposed that will require the property owners of designated historic resources to maintain the exterior, character-defining features of their properties so that they do not fall into disrepair and have a detrimental effect on the character of the property, or that of the overall district, if located within a Historic District. The condition of the property at the time of its historic designation is to be the standard of reference when determining the degree of deterioration.

#### ***B. Streamline the Certificate of Appropriateness review process for emergency repairs.***

In situations where emergency repairs are needed, a provision is being proposed that explicitly states that a Certificate of Appropriateness needs to be issued along with a building permit pursuant to the existing Emergency Repair provision found in Section 4-1-4 of the Mesa Building Regulations.

#### **PUBLIC OUTREACH AND FEEDBACK:**

The proposed Historic Preservation Design Guidelines were presented to and discussed with the Historic Preservation Board at the Board's August 1, 2023 meeting. A list of comments received from the Historic Preservation Board is attached to this report as Exhibit 2.

Additionally, a public meeting was held on August 24, 2023 where staff received feedback from residents. Many of the comments were not related to the Design Guidelines, but those that were are reflected in the Historic Preservation Board comments.

#### **ATTACHEMENTS:**

Exhibit 1 – Historic Preservation Text Amendments

Exhibit 2 – Summary of Historic Preservation Board Comments