# CHAPTER 74: HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROCEDURES

(08/27/2026)

## CHAPTER 74 - HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROCEDURES

### 11-74-1: PURPOSE

This Chapter establishes uniform procedures for the designation of a Historic Preservation Overlay, regulations for Historic Resources on the Mesa Historic Property Register, the uniform procedures for the designation and regulation of signs on the Mesa Historic Sign Register, and requirements for protection and preservation of archaeological resources. Specifically, this Chapter:

A. Recognizes that the form and character of the City of Mesa are reflected in its cultural, historic, architectural, and archaeological heritage;

B. Preserves the unique cultural heritage, encourages and facilitates public knowledge and appreciation of the past, fosters civic and neighborhood pride, and encourages public participation in identifying and preserving historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources;

C. Enhances property values, protects and enhances the City's attraction to tourists and visitors, stimulates business and industry, and identifies and resolves possible conflicts between the preservation of cultural and Historic Resources and alternative land uses;

D. Stabilizes neighborhoods through preservation of historic and cultural resources and maintenance of the existing built environment;

E. Preserves the diverse architectural styles, patterns of development, and design preferences that reflect phases of the City's history and encourages complementary contemporary design and construction; and

F. Safeguards and manages archaeological resources to preserve cultural heritage and promote cultural resource education, in compliance with federal and state historic preservation requirements.

### 11-74-2: - MESA HISTORIC PROPERTY REGISTER

A. **Purpose of the Mesa Historic Property Register.**

1. The Mesa Historic Property Register is a list of Historic Resources that together make up the official record of all Historic Preservation Overlay designations in the corporate limits of the City.

2. The Historic Preservation Officer will maintain the Mesa Historic Property Register and make it available to the public.

B. **Supplemental Inventory List.**

1. The Supplemental Inventory List is a list of building(s), structure(s), object(s), site(s), and district(s), that have been determined eligible for inclusion in the Mesa Historic Property Register but not yet designated.

2. To be included on the Supplemental Inventory List, Historic Resources must meet the eligibility requirements in this Chapter.

3. The Historic Preservation Officer will maintain the Supplemental Inventory List and make it available to the public.

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**11-74-3: - HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY**

A. **Purpose**. The purpose of the Historic Preservation Overlay is to:

1. Recognize and protect Historic Resources that represent important aspects of the past;
2. Enhance the character of the City by considering such Historic Resources during development; and
3. Set forth the requirements property owners must follow in the preservation, restoration, and maintenance of Historic Resources.

B. **Land Use Regulations.**

1. A Historic Preservation Overlay is used in combination with an underlying base zoning district(s), thereby permitting the same uses as the underlying base zoning district(s).
2. An application for a Historic Preservation Overlay is a rezoning of the property and must follow the process and requirements in both Section 11-74-3 and Chapter 76 of the Zoning Ordinance.

C. **Eligibility Criteria**. A Historic Resource(s) is eligible for a Historic Preservation Overlay if it meets the following eligibility criteria:

1. ***Age.*** Part of the Historic Resource(s) is 50 years old or older; and
2. ***Significance.*** The Historic Resource(s) substantially meets at least one (1) of the following:
    a. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local, state, or national history; or
    b. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in the local, state, or national past; or
    c. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represents the work of a master; possesses high artistic value; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
    d. Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; and
3. ***Integrity.*** The Historic Resource(s) encompasses the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture, while substantially maintaining the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.
4. ***Additional Minimum Area Requirements for a Historic District.*** In addition to the eligibility criteria in Section 11-74-3(C)(1-3), a Historic District must contain either:
    a. Seven (7) or more properties, lots, or parcels, whether or not separated by a street; or
    b. At least four (4) or more adjacent lots or parcels with at least 300 feet of continuous street frontage.
    c. A historic district may also include or be composed of one (1) or more archaeological sites.

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D. **Application Process**. An applicant requesting a Historic Preservation Overlay for a Historic Landmark or Historic District must submit all the following:

1. An application filed with the Planning Division in accordance with both the application requirements in Chapter 67 of the Zoning Ordinance and the Historic Preservation Overlay application guidelines;
2. Payment of the applicable fee;
3. For a Historic District, signatures of a minimum of 50% plus one (1) of the property owners within the boundaries of the proposed Historic Preservation Overlay and who own at least 50% of the total land area within the boundaries of the proposed Historic Preservation Overlay;
4. For a Historic Landmark, the signature of the property owner;
5. A Citizen Participation Plan that conforms with Section 11-67-3 of the Zoning Ordinance; and
6. Any other information the Historic Preservation Officer may reasonably deem necessary to review the application.

E. **Review Process**.

1. ***Determination of a Complete Application.*** Following the submission of an application, the Planning Director, or designated member of the Planning Division staff or the Historic Preservation Officer, shall determine whether an application is complete.
   a. *Incomplete Application*. If an application is deemed incomplete, the applicant will be notified in writing of the additional forms, information, and/or fees required to complete the application.
   b. *Complete Application*. Once an application is deemed complete, it will be distributed to City staff for review to ensure compliance with all applicable City codes and regulations.
2. ***Public Hearing Scheduled.*** After the application has been deemed complete and all applicable City code and regulation requirements have been met, the request for a Historic Preservation Overlay will be scheduled for a public hearing, and the applicant will be notified of the date and time.
3. ***Recommendation Required Before Council Hearing of Request.*** Before the request for a Historic Preservation Overlay is considered by the City Council the Historic Preservation Board and the Planning and Zoning Board shall each hold a public hearing and forward a recommendation to City Council.
   a. The Historic Preservation Board shall first consider the request. At the public hearing the Historic Preservation Board can either continue the request or, at the conclusion of the public hearing, make a recommendation to City Council.
   a. Following the public hearing by the Historic Preservation Board, the request shall be heard at a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Board and City Council in accordance with Chapter 76 of the Zoning Ordinance.
4. ***Conditions of Approval.*** When making a recommendation to City Council, both the Historic Preservation Board and the Planning and Zoning Board may include reasonable conditions of approval to fully carry out the provisions and intent of the Zoning Ordinance.

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F. **Notice of Public Hearings**. A Historic Preservation Overlay is a rezoning that requires the same notice of public hearing required by A.R.S. §9-462.04 and the following:

1. ***Site Posting.*** The applicant shall post a four (4) foot by four (4) foot sign(s) on the subject property no less than 15-days prior to the first scheduled hearing. In addition to this sign, the applicant for a Historic District shall consult with the Historic Preservation Officer to determine the number, size, and location of signs to provide sufficient notice. The sign(s) shall contain the following information:

    a. The words "Zoning Hearing"

    b. Date and time of hearing

    c. Case number

    d. Request

    e. Applicant

    f. Applicant phone number

    g. Planning Division phone number

2. ***Notice Letter.*** The applicant shall provide additional notice by first class mail at least 15-days prior to the first scheduled hearing. Notice must be sent to all property owners located within 500 feet of the exterior boundary of the subject property or properties, based on the last assessment of the Maricopa County Assessor's Office or other public records.

G. **Council Authority to Remove Property from a Proposed Historic Preservation Overlay Designation.** The City intends for Historic Preservation Overlay designations to be voluntary and supported by affected property owners, therefore:

1. City Council shall not include any Historic Resource within a proposed Historic Preservation Overlay if the property owner has submitted written objection or voiced opposition at a public hearing.

2. City Council may remove any Historic Resource from a proposed Historic Preservation Overlay if the property owner has not responded to a request for comment on the proposed designation.

H. **Process to Remove a Historic Preservation Overlay.** The process to remove a Historic Preservation Overlay is a rezoning that requires an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that shall follow the process and requirements in both this Chapter and Chapter 76 of the Zoning Ordinance.

I. **Duty to Maintain.**

1. The owner of a Historic Resource within a Historic Preservation Overlay shall not permit any portion of the Historic Resource to fall into a state of disrepair.

2. The condition of the Historic Resource on the effective date of the Historic Preservation Overlay designation shall serve as the standard of reference for evaluating whether the Historic Resource has fallen into a state of disrepair.

**11-74-4: - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

A. **Purpose.** A Certificate of Appropriateness is a formal approval issued by the City for proposed alterations, additions, demolitions, or new construction affecting properties located within a Historic Preservation Overlay District. The purpose of a Certificate of Appropriateness is to ensure that changes are consistent with City codes and regulations, the United States Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (36 CFR part 68 under the authority

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of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966), and the "Mesa Historic Preservation Design Guidelines."

B. **Certificate of Appropriateness Required.** Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness is required for the following:

1. Any construction, alteration, modification, or rehabilitation of a Historic Resource located within a Historic Preservation Overlay, including but not limited to: additions, awnings, canopies, carports, garages, decks, detached accessory buildings or structures, doors, door frames, driveways, exterior walls, fencing and gates, fire escapes, exterior stairs, exterior elevators, ramps for the disabled, painting of historically unpainted surfaces (e.g., wood, stone, brick, terra cotta, concrete, marble), parapet walls, pools, pool cages, porches, porch posts, balcony railings or decorative detailing, roofs, skylights, siding, and windows. This list is by no means exclusive or comprehensive. The Historic Preservation Officer will determine if a Certificate of Appropriateness is required.

2. New construction that is located within a Historic Preservation Overlay.

C. **Ordinary Maintenance and Repairs-Certificate of Appropriateness Not Required.** A Certificate of Appropriateness is not required for ordinary maintenance or repairs of a Historic Resource within a Historic Preservation Overlay if it meets either of the following requirements:

1. It does not change the material or design of, or alter the features that contribute to the distinctive character and general appearance of the Historic Resource; or

2. It entails the in-kind replacement of materials or repainting of historic materials that are currently painted (i.e., wood, brick, stone, or stucco).

D. **Application Process**. An applicant requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness must submit all the following:

1. An application filed with the Planning Division in accordance with both the application requirements in Chapter 67 of the Zoning Ordinance and the Certificate of Appropriateness application guidelines;

2. In addition to the requirements in Chapter 67 of the Zoning Ordinance, the application must include the following:

a. A project narrative that includes a brief description of the proposed project, listing the intention and any necessary justification for modifications;

b. Payment of the applicable fee;

c. Photographs of the existing property;

d. Drawings, to approximate scale, of the site plan, floor plan(s), and elevation(s) of the proposed work, indicating dimensions and materials;

e. If signage is part of the proposed work, drawings, to approximate scale, showing the size, location, materials, type of lettering to be used and color and type of illumination, if any; and

f. Any other information that the Historic Preservation Officer may reasonably deem necessary to review the proposed work.

E. **Review Process.**

1. Within 10 City working days of the submittal of a complete application with the required fees, the Historic Preservation Officer shall either request revisions to the proposed work, approve the Certificate of Appropriateness, or provide written findings explaining the

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reason for denial.

2. The decision of the Historic Preservation Officer shall be based upon whether the proposed work complies with the United States Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties,* "The Mesa Historic Preservation Design Guidelines," and the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

3. Additional guidelines, proposed by the Historic Preservation Board and approved by the City Council, may also be used by the Historic Preservation Officer in the review and approval of an application, provided the guidelines are not inconsistent with the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

F. **Building Permits.**

1. ***Building Division Referral***. Prior to issuance of a building permit for the construction, alteration, modification, rehabilitation, demolition, maintenance or repair of a Historic Resource within a Historic Preservation Overlay, the Building Official shall first refer such application to the Historic Preservation Officer for review and determination if a Certificate of Appropriateness is required.

2. ***Certificate of Approval Required Prior to Building Permit***. If a Certificate of Appropriateness is required, no building permit shall be issued until a Certificate of Appropriateness has been approved. Any building permit issued must be in conformance with the conditions and requirements specified in the approved Certificate of Appropriateness.

3. ***Emergency Repairs.*** If a Historic Resource is damaged and requires emergency repairs, a Certificate of Appropriateness, if required, shall be issued concurrently with the issuance of the required building permit.

4. ***Effective Dates***.

   a. A Certificate of Appropriateness is effective for two (2) years from the date of issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by either the Historic Preservation Officer or the Historic Preservation Board.

   b. The Certificate of Appropriateness may be declared expired and of no further force and effect if it is not exercised within two (2) years of the date of issuance. The Certificate of Appropriateness is considered exercised when both a valid City building permit, if required, is issued.

G. **Demolition Permits.**

1. ***Approved Historic Preservation Overlay.*** A demolition permit for a Historic Resource within an approved Historic Preservation Overlay shall only be granted if either of the following exists:

   a. The Building Official, in consultation with the Historic Preservation Officer and the City Manager, determines that the Historic Resource presents an imminent hazard to the public safety, and that repair or renovation would be infeasible; or

   b. The Historic Preservation Board determines that both of the following are found:

      i. The Historic Resource has minimal historic significance because of its location, conditions, modifications, or other factors; and

      ii. Demolition of the Historic Resource would not have an adverse impact on the preservation of historic properties in the vicinity.

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2. ***Proposed Historic Preservation Overlay***. For a period of one (1) year from the date of application for a proposed Historic Preservation Overlay, the demolition of any Historic Resource within the boundaries of the proposed Historic Preservation Overlay shall not be issued, unless the following are found to be true:

   a. An application for the demolition permit was submitted to the Historic Preservation Officer for review;

   b. The Historic Resource is less than 40-years old and meets one of the following criteria:

      i. The Historic Resource is determined not to contain historic or architectural significance; or

      ii. It is determined that the Historic Resource is not a contributing feature to the Historic Preservation Overlay.

   c. If the Historic Resource is 40-years old or more or the Historic Preservation Officer finds that the conditions in (b) above are not met, the request for demolition shall be considered following the requirements of Section 1 (*Approved Historic Preservation Overlay*) above.

   d. If the proposed Historic Preservation Overlay is not approved by the City Council within one (1) year of the application filing date, the Historic Preservation Officer shall approve the request for demolition.

3. ***Actions Subsequent to Denial of a Request for Demolition.***

   a. Issuance of a demolition permit by the Building Official will be delayed one (1) year from the effective date of the denial.

   b. During the one (1) year period, the Historic Preservation Officer, Historic Preservation Board, and the applicant shall meet to attempt to negotiate and develop an agreement and/or plan to preserve the Historic Resource.

   c. Any agreement and/or plan may include public and private financial assistance, consideration of alternative land uses and/or zoning districts, relocation, expansions, or additions to the Historic Resource within its historical context, adaptive reuse of the site, or public or private purchase of the property.

   d. If no plan and/or agreement is reached, and upon the applicant's request, a clearance to issue a demolition permit shall be forwarded to the Building Official any time after the required one (1) year period has lapsed, unless all parties mutually agree to extend the time frame.

**11-74-5: - HISTORICALLY DESIGNATED SIGNS**

A. **Purpose.**

1. This Section provides standards and procedures for a sign to be designated as Historic and added to the Mesa Historic Sign Register.

2. This designation recognizes the historic character of Mesa's older neighborhoods through the preservation of historic signs.

B. **Mesa Historic Sign Register.**

1. The Mesa Historic Sign Register, as may be amended from time to time, is the official record of all Historically Designated Signs in the City.

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2. The Historic Preservation Officer shall maintain the Mesa Historic Sign Register and make it available to the public.

C. **Effect of Designation**. When a sign is designated as a historic sign and is either in good condition or has been restored to its historic appearance, the following shall apply:

1. The historic sign shall be considered legal conforming and the property on which the historic sign is located may redevelop without having to bring the historic sign into conformance with Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance, including height and area requirements; and

2. The sign area of the designated historic sign shall not count toward the total allowable sign area for the property on which it is located.

D. **Eligibility Criteria for Designation.** A sign is eligible for designation as historic if it meets the following criteria:

1. The sign has continuously existed at its present location for 50 or more years;

2. The appearance of the sign has remained substantially the same during its existence at its present location; and

3. The sign meets one of the following:

a. It represents exemplary technology, craftsmanship, or design for the period in which it was constructed;

b. It uses historic sign materials from the time of its construction, and has retained those original materials;

c. It uses some form of exposed neon lighting, electrified glass tubes, bulbs that contain rarefied neon, or another means of illumination for the time in which the sign was constructed; or

d. It is unique in that it demonstrates extraordinary aesthetic quality, creativity, or innovation.

E. **Application Process.** An application for a historic sign designation shall contain all the following:

1. An application filed with the Planning Division in accordance with the application requirements in Chapter 67 of the Zoning Ordinance.

2. In addition to the requirements in Chapter 67 of the Zoning Ordinance, the applicant shall submit all of the following:

a. *Owner Authorization Form.* An owner authorization form signed by the owner of the sign. Only the sign owner may initiate a request for designation.

b. *Project Narrative.* A project narrative that includes:

i. The original construction date and location of the sign;

ii. Statements and evidence of the height, size, location, materials, and design of the sign, such as photographs, original drawings, approved permits, site plans, or other materials; and

iii. Any other information the Historic Preservation Officer may reasonably deem necessary to determine whether the sign meets the eligibility requirements in this Section.

c. *Restoration and Maintenance Plan*. A restoration and maintenance plan that

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demonstrates:

i. The sign is in operational order, or if the sign is not in operational order, the steps and time frame necessary to make the sign operational within 180-days of submittal of the application, including a list of any parts and materials that need to be replaced;

ii. The sign is structurally sound, or if the sign is not structurally sound, outline the steps and the time frame necessary to make the sign structurally sound, including an explanation of the process that will be used to ensure the sign maintains its historic character; and

iii. Historic materials are available to continue maintenance of the sign and supporting structure in its historic character.

F. **Review Process.**

1. Once a complete application has been accepted and all fees have been paid, a public hearing shall be scheduled before the Historic Preservation Board.

2. The Historic Preservation Board may approve a sign as historic if the sign satisfies the criteria in this Subsection D.

3. The Historic Preservation Board may impose reasonable conditions to satisfy the criteria, including a statement of the character defining elements that must be maintained.

G. **Notice of Public Hearings**. Notice of the public hearing before the Historic Preservation Board includes all the following:

1. The same notice of public hearing as required by A.R.S. § 9-462.04; and

2. Posting the subject property, no less than 15-days prior to the first scheduled hearing; and

3. Providing additional notice by first class mail a minimum of 15-days prior to the first scheduled hearing date to all owners of property located within 500 feet of the exterior boundary of the property that is the subject of the application, based on the last county assessment.

H. **Sign Restoration**.

1. A historic sign designation is contingent to the sign being operational and restored to its historic function and appearance in accordance with any conditions imposed by the Historic Preservation Board.

2. If a sign is not restored consistent with the conditions imposed by the Historic Preservation Board or if the sign is not operational within 180-days of the Historic Preservation Board approval, the historic sign designation will be automatically revoked.

3. The owner of the historic sign may request an extension from the Historic Preservation Officer or appeal the automatic revocation to the Historic Preservation Board as provided in Chapter 77 of the Zoning Ordinance.

I. **Sign Maintenance and Repair.**

1. The owner of a historic designated sign is responsible for maintaining the historic sign.

2. Maintenance may not include any change in material, design, or character defining feature.

3. If a historic sign is damaged or partially destroyed, in order to maintain the historic sign designation, the owner of the historic sign must either restore or rebuild the historic sign consistent with its character defining features.

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J. **Sign Modifications**. The Historic Preservation Officer may approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for modifications to a historic sign that are consistent with the original findings and conditions imposed by the Historic Preservation Board as described in this Section.

K. **Demolition of a Historic Sign.** Prior to applying for a demolition permit for a historic sign, the historic sign designation must be revoked in accordance with this Section.

L. **Revocation of Historic Sign Designation.** The Historic Preservation Officer may revoke a historic sign designation for the following reasons:

1. The historic sign is not maintained, repaired, or modified as required in Subsection I; or
2. The historic sign is modified or repaired inconsistent with the Historic Preservation Board's findings, conditions imposed by the Historic Preservation Board, or both; or
3. The property owner submits a written request that includes a summary of the reasons for the revocation request including a summary of why the sign no longer meets the historic sign criteria outlined in this Subsection D. A sign owner may appeal the Historic Preservation Officer's decision for revocation of the historic sign designation to the Historic Preservation Board, as provided in Chapter 77 of the Zoning Ordinance.

**11-74-6: - ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

A. **Purpose.** The City recognizes that archaeological resources are an integral part of the community's diverse cultural heritage. The purpose of this section is to:

1. Affirm that archaeological resources are irreplaceable community assets that represent significant aspects of the past, may retain connections to living communities, and merit stewardship for future generations; and
2. Enhance the City's community character and heritage by considering archaeological resources during development, where appropriate.

B. **Private Land.**

1. All development on private land must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations governing the protection of cultural resources.
2. To ensure compliance with local, state, and/or federal cultural resources regulations, it is the responsibility of the developer to consult with the City Archaeologist, the State Historic Preservation Office, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, and any other qualified professionals, as appropriate.

C. **Land Owned or Controlled by the City.**

1. All development on land owned or controlled by the City shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations governing the protection of cultural resources.
2. Prior to excavating on land owned or controlled by the City, the developer shall consult with the City Archaeologist who may conduct an archaeological assessment to determine whether the property contains archaeological resources, historic properties, or other protected cultural materials, remains, objects, or places governed by applicable local, state, or federal laws and regulations.

D. **Archaeological Assessment.**

1. If determined appropriate under Section C, an archaeological assessment may include:
   a. Review of the Mesa Historic Property Register and Supplemental Inventory List

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b. Review of AZSITE, a consolidated informational network of recorded cultural resources including prehistoric and historic sites and properties, and surface surveys within the state of Arizona, managed by the Arizona State Museum;

c. Coordination with Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, State Historic Preservation Office, and other qualified professionals, as appropriate.

d. Any additional information deemed reasonably necessary to evaluate the potential for archaeological resources, historic properties, or other protected cultural materials, remains, or objects.

**11-74-7: - APPEALS**

A. **Appeals from the Historic Preservation Officer.** Decisions made by the Historic Preservation Officer may be appealed to the Historic Preservation Board subject to Chapter 77 of the Zoning Ordinance.

B. **Appeals from the Historic Preservation Board**. Decisions made by the Historic Preservation Board under this Chapter may be appealed to City Council subject to the appeal provisions of Chapter 77 of the Zoning Ordinance.

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