Agenda Item: 3-b

Historic Preservation Board

Discuss and make a recommendation to City Council regarding the Proposed amendments to the Mesa Historic Preservation Design Guidelines

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HPB – September 01, 2026

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Historic Preservation
Design Guidelines

Why Update the Design Guidelines?

- Existing guidelines were first created in 1996 and then updated in 2001
- Mesa's Historic Preservation program has grown significantly since then
- New document is easier to use, search, and update Supports consistent decision-making while protecting Mesa's historic character

Modernizing the Existing Guidelines

The updated guidelines:

- Reflect Mesa's expanded Historic Preservation program
- Address additional Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks designated since original document
- Transition from a primarily printed document to a searchable digital resource
- Improve accessibility through hyperlinks and keyword searches
- Better align with current preservation practices

How the Guidelines Are Used

The Design Guidelines are intended to:

- Assist property owners, architects, designers, and contractors
- Guide appropriate improvements to historic properties
- Support Historic Preservation Board and staff review
- Provide consistent evaluation of Certificate of Appropriateness applications
- Encourage compatible development while preserving historic character

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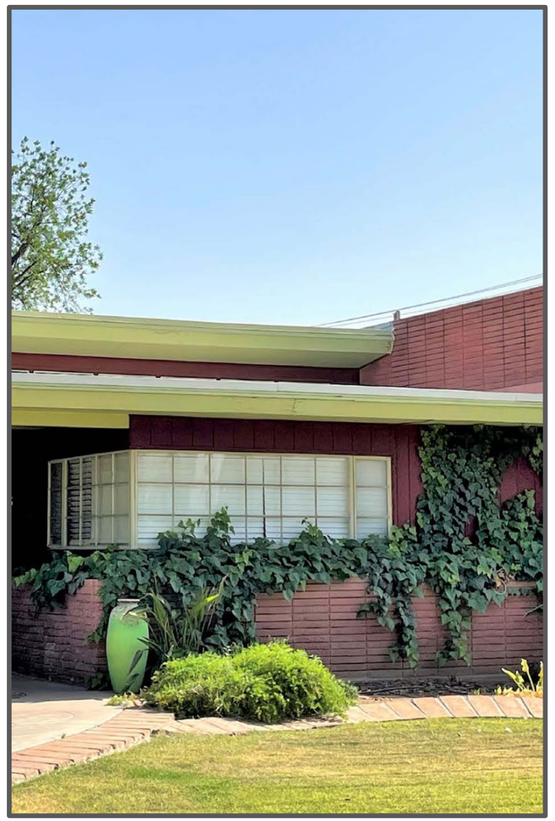
Comprehensive Yet Easy to Use

The document is organized into major sections covering:

- Certificates of Appropriateness
- Preservation, Restoration, and Rehabilitation
- Additions to Historic Buildings
- New Construction
- Historic Signage
- Historic Building Types and Architectural Styles

Supporting appendices provide:

- Program overview
- Character-defining features
- Heritage Neighborhood details



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What the Guidelines Address

The guidelines provide recommendations for:

- Character-defining features
- Building materials and architectural details
- Windows, doors, roofs, porches, and foundations
- Additions and new construction
- Building height, scale, setbacks, and compatibility
- Landscaping, fences, signage, and mechanical equipment

Goal: Preserve historic character while allowing thoughtful investment and change.

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Preserving What Makes Historic Places Unique

The guidelines emphasize:

- Identifying and preserving character-defining features
- Retaining original materials and craftsmanship whenever possible
- Designing additions and new construction that are compatible—but not imitative
- Respecting the scale, massing, and character of historic neighborhoods

Historic Preservation
Design Guidelines

More Than Design Standards

The updated guidelines also include:

- Overview of Mesa's Historic Preservation Program
- Certificate of Appropriateness review standards/process
- Mesa’s cultural setting and historic development context
- Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks
- Heritage Neighborhood Program
- Architectural styles and building types unique to Mesa
- Character defining features and definitions

Public Review Process

Extensive Outreach Included:

- Historic Preservation Board meetings
- Community public meetings
- Consultation with SHPO
- Consultation with SRPMIC Tribal Historic Preservation Office
- Consultation with GRIC Tribal Historic Preservation Office
- Review by preservation stakeholders

Upcoming Hearings

- Planning & Zoning Board
- City Council

Public Review Process

Based on Board comments and after further consultation with the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community THPO and the Gila River Indian Community THPO, staff needs additional time to revise the historical context portions of:

- Chapter 7: Mesa's Historic & Architectural Context
- Appendix E - Heritage Neighborhoods & Other Heritage Places

These portions will be completed prior to being presented to City Council.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Board provides a recommendation that the City Council adopt the Updated Mesa Historic Preservation Design Guidelines with the additional Mesa historical context and Heritage Neighborhood language that will be added to Chapter 7 and Appendix E.

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For additional information, please visit:
mesaaz.gov/hp

Questions & Discussion