

The Homestead at Lehi Crossing

Historic Overlay Narrative



Removal of an existing Historic Overlay in conjunction with a Proposed Multi-Family Residential Community on Approximately 9 Acres Located at the Southeast Corner of Gilbert and McDowell Roads in Mesa

Planning Case No.: ZON21-00129

Date Submitted: May 3, 2021

I. Introduction:

Quarles & Brady LLP, on behalf of Sweetwater Companies LLC (the "Applicant"), provides this narrative to remove an existing historic overlay in conjunction with the related entitlement requests under Planning Case No. ZON21-00129, as noted below, in regard to The Homestead at Lehi Crossing, a proposed 262-unit, 4-story multi-family residential development on approximately 9 acres located at the Southeast corner of Gilbert and McDowell Roads in Mesa (the "Property" or "Development").



The Property is presently zoned RS-43-HL; the proposed zoning is to RM-5 Planned Area Development ("PAD"), along with Site Plan and Design Review approval for the site plan, building elevations, landscaping and other aspects of the Development as discussed below. A Special Use Permit is also requested in order to include a small approximately 1,500 square foot public café (to be named the "Crismon Soda Shop" in honor of the previous historic Crismon Farm homestead that at one time was located on the Property).

It is due to the former Crismon Farm homestead that the Property has the existing Historic Overlay (the "HL" portion of the existing zoning designation of the Property); as part of the development of the Property we are seeking the removal of the historic overlay.

II. Historic Background:

The Crismon family (Charles Crismon, Sr.) were one of four families to settle the Mesa area in the 1870's. The homestead (home and farm) was in the family for three generations. At the time that the Loop 202 / Red Mountain Freeway was being designed, the Crismon's applied for and received the historic overlay for the property through the City of Mesa in 2001, and the design of the freeway accommodated their property. The Property was later sold to the City of Mesa, and the home – at that time dilapidated and vacant – was demolished after the freeway was completed. The City of Mesa later sold the property to a private owner; however, the historic overlay remains and requires formal City of Mesa action to be removed.

The photograph on the cover of this application is from the Mesa Historical Museum is believed to be of an original structure on the Crismon farm – Uncle Jonnie's House.

III. Historic Recognition:

Although the Crismon Farm Homestead no longer exists, the Development proposes a number of items that will serve to acknowledge, honor, protect and reflect the cherished heritage of the Crismon family and historic significance of the Property. These efforts include:

- The name of the Development is to be “The Homestead at Lehi Crossing,” in recognition of the Crismon Farm Homestead, the Lehi area of the City of Mesa and that the Property is located at an historic crossroads for the area and that presently the adjacent trail system continues to serve as a crossing through this area of Mesa.
- A proposed small public café is to be named the “Crismon Soda Shop” in honor of the Crismon family, which will be located on the ground floor of the Development, near the office (the café requires a Special Use Permit). The Crismon Soda Shop will be designed to not only serve the residents of the development, but also the surrounding neighbors, and will be open to the public and a great point of congregation and interaction for all who enjoy the adjacent trail system. We envision members of the Mesa community stopping to hydrate and enjoy a meal as they wrap up a morning walk or horseback ride along the Sunset Trail, which is adjacent to the SRP canal system in this area. The trail system was important to the Crismon family, is an important



community amenity and the Development will serve to enhance the trail experience with new landscaping just north of the trail.



- The applicant intends to collect and display historic photographs of the original Homestead structures and other significant moments of historic significance in the café.
- The project design and architectural intent is reflective of the rich history of the area and the influence of the Crismon family as the early owners of the Property. Through our research, we located a photograph from the Mesa History Museum of an original Crismon farm house believed to have previously been located on the Property (the cover photo and below). With this historic imagery as a starting point, we discovered a few new homes in the adjacent neighborhood to the south that were very reminiscent of the historic farm house and discovered a unique opportunity to combine the history of the area with a rich use of contemporary farmhouse design cues.



The preliminary building elevations create a blend of the simple lines prevalent in early farm home design reminiscent of Mesa's heritage, such as those used with the former Crismon Farm homestead, along with the careful selection of both traditional and contemporary materials. We have utilized a robust blend of board and batten, stucco and stone to create an articulation of mass, color, texture and light into our Contemporary Farmhouse concept. We have also introduced the use of rust color metal panels to accent main entries and facilitate easy wayfinding. The pattern methodology of materials and massing is intended to break down the buildings to a more intimate scale.

IV. Process for Historic Overlay removal:

We have been working with the City's Historic Preservation Coordinator, Arianna Urban, regarding removal the historic overlay, and held a virtual "meeting" with her and Evan Balmer with the City of Mesa Planning Department on April 6th, 2021. They confirmed that a separate application is not required, but did request this Historic Overlay narrative be prepared and submitted in conjunction with the related rezoning resubmittal. We understand that consideration of the removal of the historic overlay will be heard by the Mesa Historic Preservation Board as part of the rezoning process.

V. Conclusion:

The applicant believes that while the Crismon Farm Homestead no longer exists, and it is appropriate to remove the existing historic overlay, it is essential that the new development memorialize the rich history of this site.

Therefore, the proposed development, through its name ("The Homestead at Lehi Crossing"), the name of the café (the "Crismon Soda Shop"), that the café proposes to prominently display photographs and artifacts of the heritage of the Crismon family and the history of Mesa, and that the Development utilizes a design intended to reflect aspects of the farming history of the Property and area, the Development offers an opportunity to showcase the history of the Crismon family and the Property in a way that cannot occur today.