



**PLANNING DIVISION  
STAFF REPORT**

**Historic Preservation Board**

**June 1, 2021**

CASE No.: <b>ZON21-00129</b>
PROJECT NAME: <b>The Residences at the Southeast Corner of McDowell &amp; Gilbert Roads</b>

Owner's Name:	Gunning Mark S/Ron Bailey Trust
Applicant's Name:	Quarles & Brady, LLP
Location of Request:	Within the 2200 to 2400 blocks of East McDowell Road (south side) and east of Gilbert Road on the south side of McDowell Road (3.85 ± acres).
Parcel No(s):	141-06-253B
Request:	Rezone from RS-43-HL to RS-43. This request will remove the Historic Landmark Overlay.
Existing Zoning District:	Single Residence-43 Historic Landmark (RS-43 HL)
Council District:	1
Site Size:	3.85 ± acres
HP Board Hearing Date(s):	<b>June 01, 2021, 6:00pm</b>
Report Date:	May 27, 2021
Staff Planner:	Arianna Urban
Staff Recommendation:	Approval

**HISTORY**

On **August 6, 2001**, the City Council approved a rezoning of 3.85± acres of the subject property from Single Residence 43 (RS-43) to Single Residence 43 with a Historic Landmark overlay (RS-43-HL) to establish a historic overlay for the Crismon Farms Homestead (Case No. Z01-032; Ordinance No. 3914).

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### **Background:**

In 2001, the City Council approved a Historic Landmark Overlay (HL Overlay) designation on the property (i.e. the Crismon Farm Homestead HL Overlay). At the time of approval of the HL Overlay, the parcel was owned by the City of Mesa, and was potentially intended for inclusion in one of the City's planned multi-use trails (i.e. the South Canal trail), as well as being used as a cultural museum. In 2004 and 2005, the City completed a preliminary design for its South Canal trail. The trail design proposal did not include the Crismon Farm Homestead as part of the project scope. Accordingly, Mesa sold the property in July of 2005, and in April 2006 the Historic Preservation Officer in conjunction with City staff granted a request for demolition permits necessary for the new owners to demolish all of the historic structures on the property. The demolition of the historic structures and subsequent grading of the site removed any historic significance related to the property. As such, the Historic Landmark overlay on the property no longer signifies the presence of historic resources.

In April 2010, the Historic Preservation Board unanimously voted to recommend removal of the Crismon Farmstead HL Overlay on the basis that the overlay was no longer necessary because the buildings on the property had been removed. However, that case did not go on to be heard by the Planning and Zoning Board or City Council. The request to remove the HL Overlay will allow construction of buildings and structures on the property without requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The Historic Landmark Overlay designation was established based upon the significance of the site as one of the few remaining farm properties constructed in a Folk Vernacular style (constructed according to the changing needs of the owners, without a professionally trained architect), and its association with the Crismon family. It was placed on the property as a way to preserve the historic significance of the site. However, because the historic buildings have been demolished, the HL Overlay designation on the property is no longer appropriate and should be removed.

In order to recognize the significance of the site, the applicant has expressed interest in developing an interpretation strategy to communicate the site's history to visitors.

### **General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:**

The subject property is designated a Neighborhood Character area in the 2040 Mesa General Plan. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the primary focus of the Neighborhood character area is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community. As part of a total neighborhood area, this character type may also contain commercial uses along arterial frontages and at major street intersections.

Chapter 4 of the General Plan, "Creating and Maintaining a Variety of Great Neighborhoods," incorporates general policies and strategies for historic preservation. They include:

- Support for the Historic Preservation Program as an important tool to help maintain Mesa neighborhoods and preserve our past.
- Creation of new Historic Districts and Heritage Neighborhoods.

- Administration of the Historic Preservation Program according to standards established in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

Removal of the HL Overlay at the former Crismon Farm Homestead is in keeping with the goals of the General Plan. As the purpose of an HL Overlay is to recognize and preserve Mesa's cultural, historic, and architectural heritage, continuing to maintain the HL Overlay on a property that has lost its historic significance can create a false sense of history. In order to grow a strong preservation program, important tools like the Historic Overlay and the Historic Property Register should reflect the current conditions of each property. As such, this request is consistent with the vision of the Mesa General Plan.

### **Zoning District Designations**

The purpose of the Historic Landmark Overlay is to recognize and preserve Mesa's cultural, historical, and architectural heritage. This overlay is intended to stabilize properties and neighborhoods through the preservation of significant cultural resources through maintaining and appropriately improving the existing built environment. It is intended to preserve Mesa's diverse architectural styles, patterns of development, and design evolution that reflect phases of the City's history.

According to Section 11-23-4 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance, to be eligible for a historic zoning overlay, a historic landmark must be at least 50 years old, display "exceptional historic, visual, or architectural significance," and must:

1. Exemplify or reflect special elements of Mesa's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural past; or
2. Embody distinguishing characteristics of a style, period, method of construction, or development in Mesa, or serve as a valuable example of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or
3. Represent the notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect; or
4. Represent a rare building type, style, design, or indigenous building form; or
5. Is identifiable with a person or event significant in local, state, or national history.

When the 2001 Historic Landmark Overlay was placed on the Crismon Farm Homestead, it fulfilled the necessary characteristics outlined in the Zoning Ordinance. However, now that the historic buildings have been removed, the property no longer retains its historic context and does not meet the requirements for a Historic Landmark Overlay.

### **Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:**

As part of the Citizen Participation process, the applicant mailed notification letters to property owners within 500 feet of the site, Homeowner Associations (HOAs) within ½ mile of the site, and registered neighborhoods within one mile of the site. As of writing this report, the applicant has not received any comments or concerns from surrounding property owners pertaining to the removal of the Historic Overlay. Staff will provide the Board with any new information during the scheduled hearing on June 1, 2021.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The subject request is consistent with the General Plan, the Mesa Zoning Ordinance Chapter 23, and the intent of the Historic Landmark Zoning Overlay. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the request to remove the HL Overlay from the Crismon Farm Homestead.

**Conditions of Approval:**

None

**Exhibits:**

**Exhibit 1-Staff Report**

**Exhibit 2-Vicinity Map**

**Exhibit 3-Project Narrative**