MESA

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN GUIDELINES



mesa·az

PREPARED BY
THE CITY OF MESA

Sirrine House • 160 N Center St.

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Created | October 2026



Downtown Mesa Mural at 47 W Main St.

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Preface

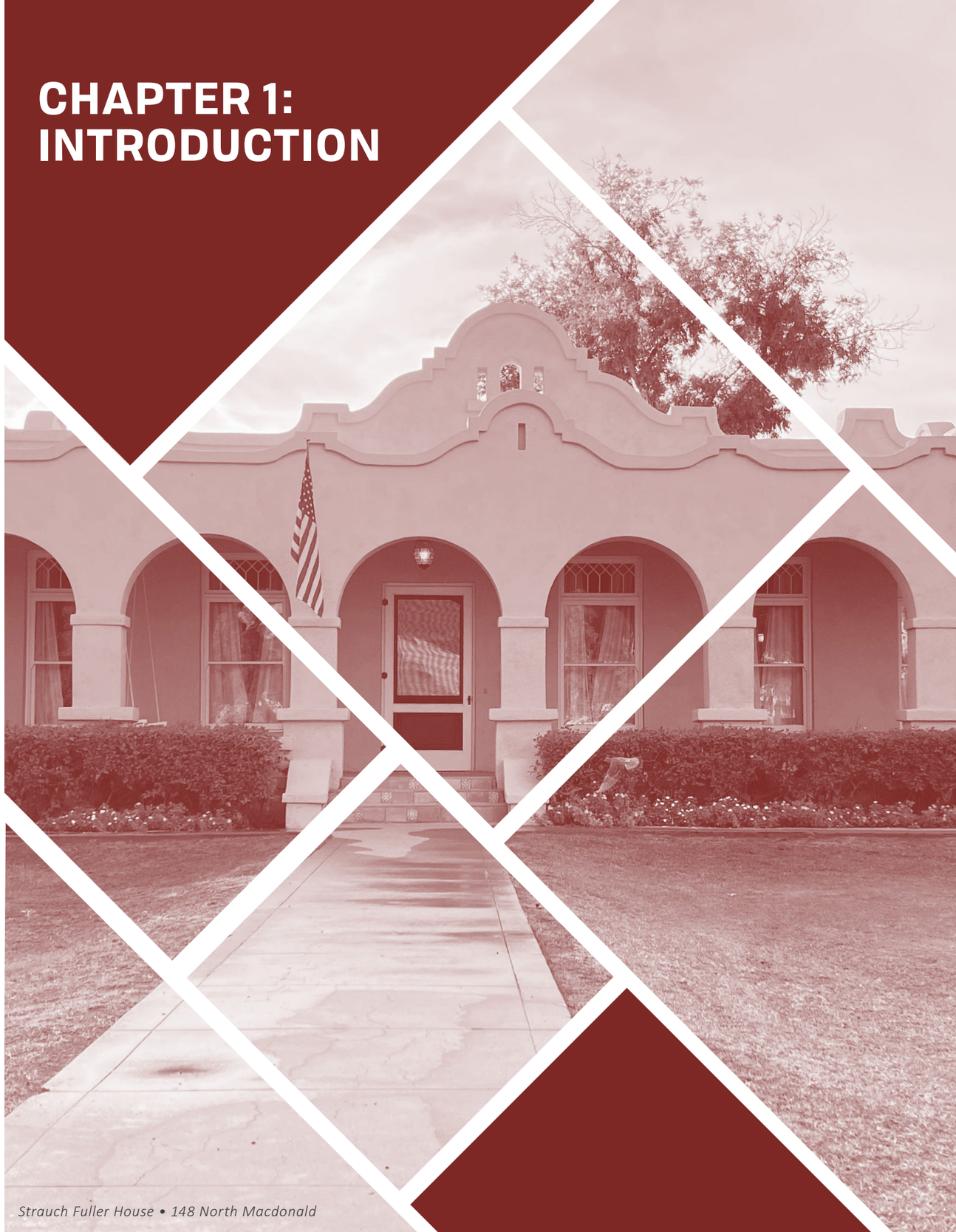
The Mesa Historic Preservation Design Guidelines are created to encourage the preservation and thoughtful stewardship of the City's historically significant resources while recognizing the need for their continued adaptation, maintenance, and improvement. By promoting appropriate historic property treatments, these guidelines help to preserve the historic integrity, community character, and unique sense of place that define Mesa's historic neighborhoods and historic places. They also support long-term investment in Mesa's historic resources by providing clear expectations and encouraging appropriate projects.

The Historic Preservation Design Guidelines provide a framework for preservation decisions for the Historic Preservation Office, the Historic Preservation Board, the Planning and Zoning Board, the Mesa City Council, and property owners. Historic Preservation Guidelines included in this document are the tools by which the Historic Preservation Office and the Historic Preservation Board evaluate proposed projects involving properties that are locally designated with a Historic Preservation (HP) overlay or Historic Signs listed on the Mesa Historic Sign Register. These guidelines are intended to ensure that projects are compatible with the historic character and integrity of historic resources and help provide a fair, predictable, and efficient design review process for all applicants.

Living Document

Like all cities, Mesa faces balancing growth, changing community values, and gaining new understandings of significance. Similarly, preservation practices, standards, and historic designations evolve as well. The format of these guidelines is designed to be open-ended, allowing new revisions and additions to be made as new architectural styles, construction and preservation methods, and neighborhood situations are encountered.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



Strauch Fuller House • 148 North Macdonald



855 E 2nd St. • Fraser Fields Historic District

Purpose

This document provides guidance for planning, designing, and undertaking improvements to historic homes, buildings, sites, structures, and signs in Mesa. These guidelines accompany and supplement the historic preservation regulations found in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance and establish a basis for determining the appropriateness of construction projects proposed for locally designated historic resources.

This document will:

- Assist City staff and the Historic Preservation Board in decision-making.
- Support appropriate changes that are compatible with the distinctive character of historic resources.
- Help identify and resolve specific design concerns frequently raised in historic districts.
- Assist the local building industry, including architects, contractors, and suppliers, as well as City officials such as building inspectors and utility providers, in understanding the nature of historic areas and how to reinforce their special character.
- Improve the design quality of future developments within historic districts and ensure growth remains consistent with the district's historic character.
- Protect current property values and public investment in historic districts and landmarks by discouraging poorly designed and inappropriate projects.
- Increase the overall public awareness of the unique character of Mesa's historic resources.
- Provide background information on the architectural history of Mesa, including designated historic districts and landmarks.

When Should This Document Be Used?

Design Review Guidance

City staff and the Historic Preservation Board can use these guidelines when conducting historic reviews, when evaluating projects with the potential to be historically designated, and as a tool to communicate with applicants the treatment options that are compatible with their historic resource.

Preparing for Property Improvements

Property owners, designers, and contractors are encouraged to draw upon the principles set forth in these guidelines when planning improvements within historic neighborhoods or to a historic property.

Supporting Community Character

These guidelines help preserve the architectural character, historic integrity, and unique sense of place that make Mesa's historic neighborhoods distinctive. By encouraging compatible improvements and providing clear expectations, they support long-term investment in historic resources and protect property values.

Using the Guidelines

This document contains guidance on appropriate treatments for Mesa's historic properties and direction for achieving historic standards. While it attempts to cover multiple scenarios, it is best to consult with the Mesa Historic Preservation Office and the current Building Code for information pertaining to specific properties prior to beginning a project. Guidance for signage is also detailed, including both historic signs and signs on historic buildings.

The design guidelines are intended to help property owners, designers, and contractors evaluate what is, or is not, appropriate before bringing plans to the Historic Preservation Office or the Historic Preservation Board for review or approval.

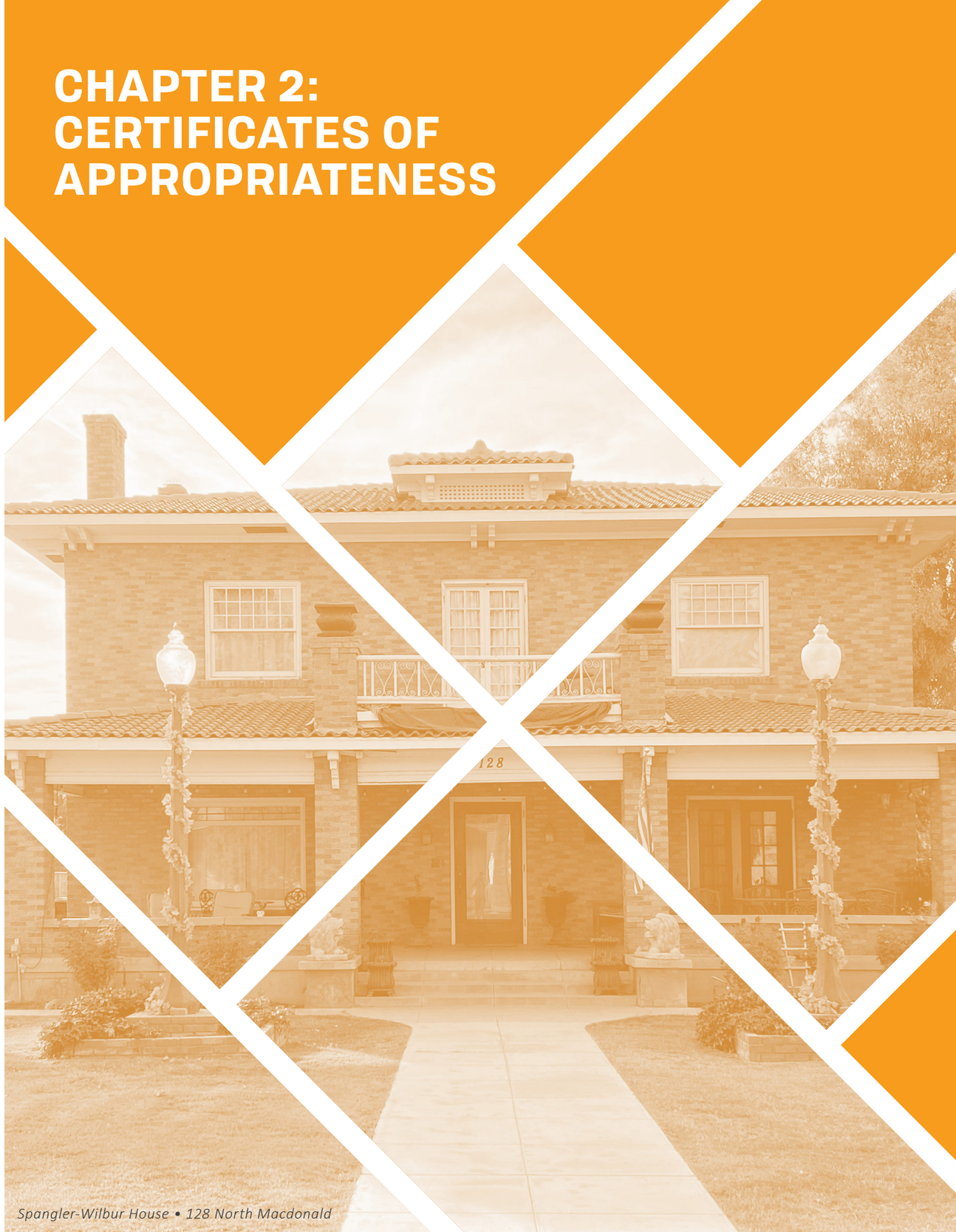
Chapters 1 through 7 include technical guidance for projects related to historic resources in Mesa, while the appendices that follow provide additional context for those who wish to learn more. Hyperlinks have been included throughout for easy navigation.



59 E 1st St. • The Studios at Mesa City Center

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CHAPTER 2: CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS



Spangler-Wilbur House • 128 North Macdonald

COA Review Process

A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is a review process used to ensure that proposed exterior changes to locally designated historic resources are consistent with Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. The process helps preserve the character-defining features and historic integrity of properties, signage, and/or districts while allowing for appropriate alterations, additions, repairs, and new construction.

What is Subject to COA Review?

A COA is required for all exterior work that will result in material changes that may alter, diminish, eliminate, or affect the historic character of the following:

- **Resources within a Historic Preservation Overlay**
- **Historically Designated Signs**

Additions, new construction, rehabilitation work, and/or proposed changes or alterations to these locally designated historic resources will require a COA; ordinary maintenance and repair, in-kind replacement, and interior work do not require a COA.

Historic Preservation Overlay

All historic resources with a Historic Preservation Overlay, including properties within locally designated historic districts and locally designated historic landmark sites, are subject to design review by the Mesa Historic Preservation Office. All properties within a Historic Preservation Overlay are listed on the Mesa Historic Property Register.

Mesa Historic Property Register

The Mesa Historic Property Register is the official record of locally designated historic resources in the City of Mesa. Some properties may be listed in the Mesa Historic Property Register and the National Register of Historic Places, while others may only be listed in one register. Only those that are listed in the Mesa Historic Property Register have a Historic Preservation Overlay requiring a COA. Work involving not yet listed historic resources should conform with these guidelines, and property owners are encouraged to work with the Mesa Historic Preservation Office.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AND THE MESA HISTORIC PROPERTY REGISTER

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places is an honorary recognition and generally places no restrictions or obligations on private property owners.

The Mesa Historic Property Register is a local program that designates historic resources within Mesa. Properties on the Mesa Historic Property Register require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) before beginning exterior work on their properties. For more information regarding National and Local designation, please see Appendix A.

CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING HISTORIC RESOURCES

Individual properties either contribute or do not contribute to a district's historic and architectural significance. Generally, contributing resources are buildings, sites, and structures 50 years of age or older that maintain architectural integrity and character. Noncontributing resources are typically those that are less than 50 years old, or where historic integrity is significantly compromised.

All projects within local historic districts are reviewed to ensure that the historic character of the district is maintained.

Historically Designated Signs

Historic signs may be eligible for inclusion on the **Mesa Historic Sign Register** as a Historically Designated Sign. This designation recognizes Mesa's historic character through the preservation of its distinct, colorful roadside historic signage.

To be on the Mesa Historic Sign Register, a sign must be at least 50 years old and retain an appearance that has remained substantially the same as its historically significant period.

Upon designation, a Historically Designated Sign needs to be maintained, modified, or repaired consistent with the Historic Preservation Board's findings and conditions of approval. Modifications to historic signs on the Mesa Historic Sign Register require a COA.

Relationship with City Code

To protect the irreplaceable architectural character of Mesa's historic resources, the City Council adopted Historic Preservation Overlay and Historically Designated Sign procedures found in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

With the support of stakeholders, these historic preservation design guidelines were created to supplement the historic preservation procedures found in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance, Building Code, and other applicable regulations. In instances where there are inconsistencies between the City Code and these design guidelines, the standards of the Mesa City Code will apply.



West 2nd St. Historic District • 100 Block of North Macdonald

How to Apply for a COA

Prior to submitting a COA application, it is recommended that applicants meet with the Historic Preservation Office to discuss project details. The Historic Preservation Office can assist in identifying if your property is within a Historic Preservation Overlay or includes a Historically Designated Sign, provide guidance for projects to meet approval criteria, and support you through the COA application process.

Applications may require a project narrative, site plan, drawings, photographs, property owner authorization, and other information reasonably necessary to review the proposed work. COA applications can be completed online by 'Creating a Planning Application' here.

COA Review Procedures

Once the City of Mesa receives a complete COA application, the Historic Preservation Office will have 10 working days to approve the application, request revisions, or deny the application with explanation (Fig 2.1). Applicants may appeal COA decisions to the Historic Preservation Board.



555 N Robson • Evergreen Historic District

Examples of Alterations Subject to COA Review:

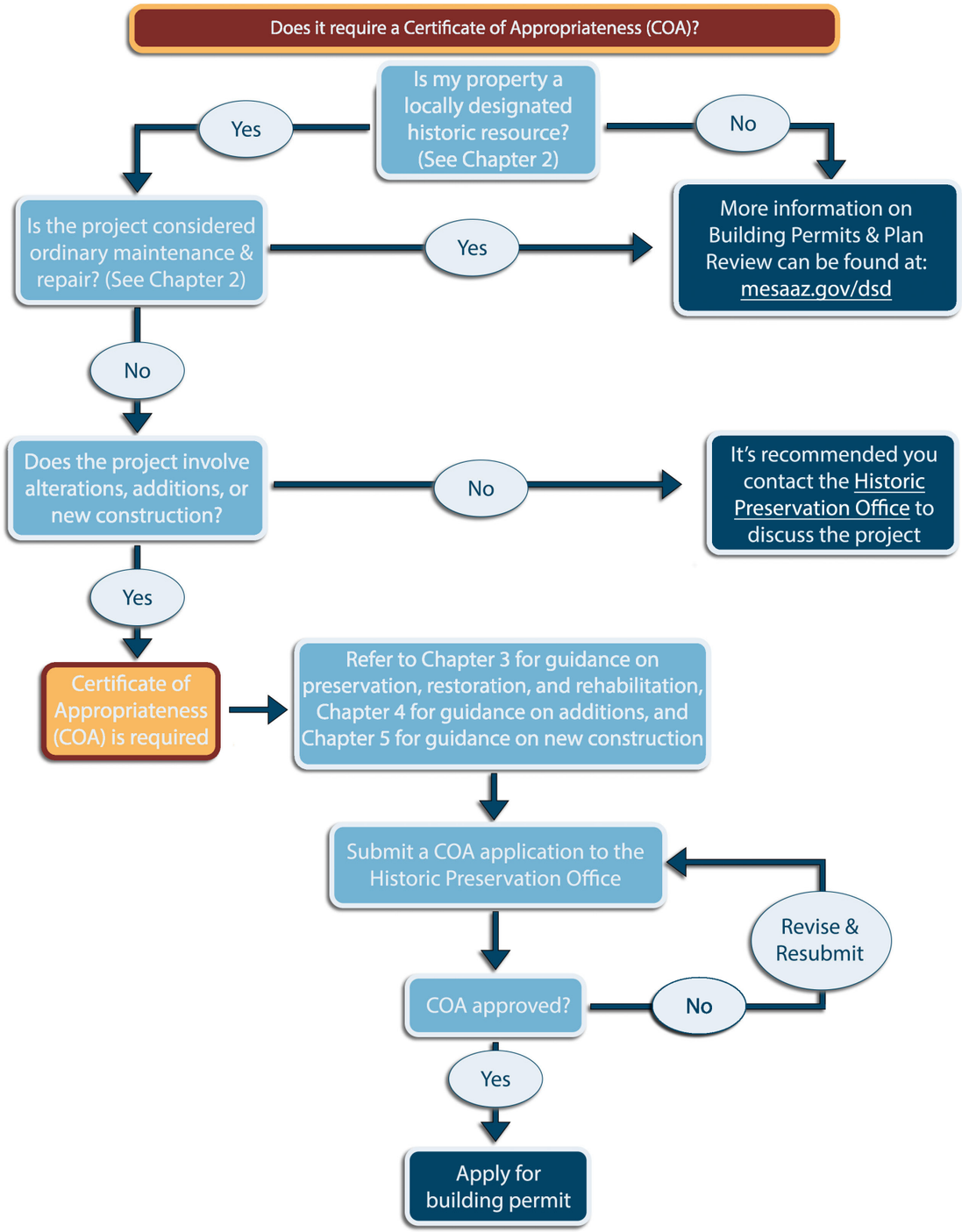
- Additions
- Awnings or canopies
- Carports and garages
- Decks
- Detached accessory buildings or structures
- Doors and door frames
- Driveways
- Exterior walls and fencing
- Fire escapes, exterior stairs and elevators, and ramps
- Parapet walls
- Pool and pool cages
- Exterior painting of historically unpainted surfaces
- Porch and balcony railing or decorative detailing
- Roofs and skylights
- Windows and window frames
- Siding
- Signs

For questions regarding historic preservation and COAs, please contact the **Mesa Historic Preservation Office:**

historicpreservation@mesaaz.gov

480.644.4726

Figure 2.1 COA Review Process



Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorized the Secretary of the Interior (through the National Park Service) to establish standards for preserving historic properties. The current version, the *U.S. Secretary of the* Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, was adopted in 2017. These standards outline four treatments for historic properties: preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. Rehabilitation is the most commonly used approach, allowing alterations to meet new uses while maintaining the building's historic character.

REHABILITATION

Act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and/or additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

PRESERVATION

Ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and architectural features rather than extensive replacement and new construction.

RESTORATION

Reinstatement of a historic building's original appearance and condition to a particular time period using documentary evidence, such as photographs and construction drawings.

RECONSTRUCTION

New construction that interprets a missing or lost historic resource based on documented evidence of what was there historically.

Local preservation guidelines often follow these standards, especially for rehabilitation projects. Property owners should consult with the Mesa Historic Preservation Office to determine the most appropriate treatment for their project.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* — in particular, the Standards for Rehabilitation — serves as a base set of preservation standards for the City of Mesa's Historic Preservation Design Guidelines.

Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historic development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The City of Mesa has adopted the historic preservation guidelines and standards for properties in Historic Preservation Overlays (Chapters 3, 4, and 5) and for historic signs (Chapter 6), based on the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines and *National Park Service Preservation Brief No. 25.*

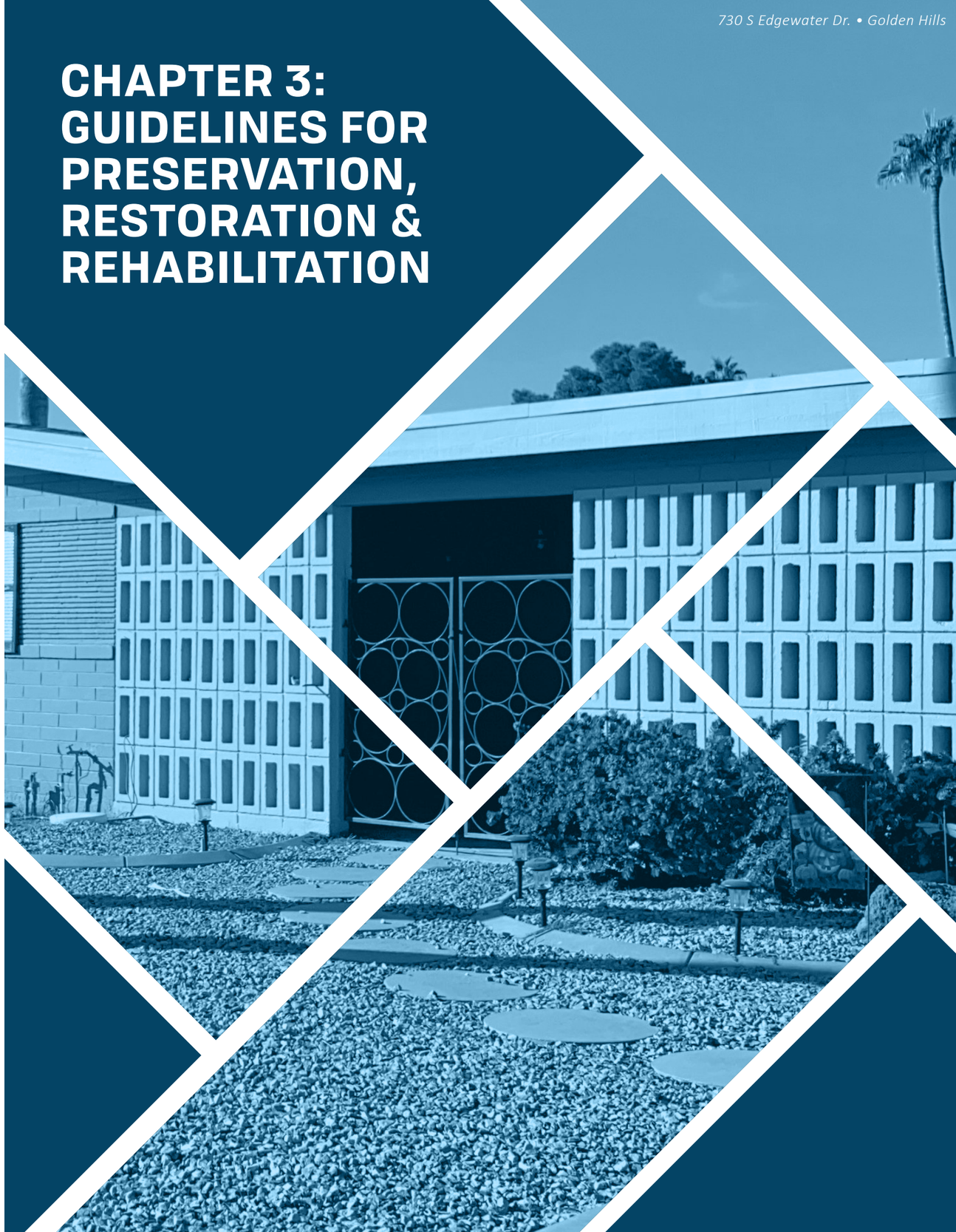
The review standards for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA), based on the *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties,* are in Appendix B, while additional educational resources can be found in Appendix A.



Mesa Woman's Club • 200 N Macdonald

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CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVATION, RESTORATION & REHABILITATION



730 S Edgewater Dr. • Golden Hills

Principles for Preservation, Restoration & Rehabilitation

This chapter outlines general principles and best practices to assist property owners, architects, landscape architects, and contractors as they plan for preservation, restoration or rehabilitation projects. These principles and guidelines are meant to help avoid rehabilitation pitfalls, prioritize essential tasks, support Certificate of Appropriateness approvals, and achieve desired design results. It is recommended that property owners also consult with the Mesa Historic Preservation Office to best assess which of these treatment options are best suited for their project.

In addition to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation projects should follow the principles outlined below.

Principle #1: Conduct routine inspections and maintenance to ensure long-term preservation of buildings and building materials.

Property owners should conduct yearly inspections of their buildings to determine and prioritize maintenance projects, especially projects related to roofs, gutter systems, and foundations where water infiltration can damage building materials, walls, and other features. Proper maintenance and cleaning using the gentlest means possible can avoid more costly repairs over the long term. Ensure no maintenance project harms, damages, or alters historic building materials.

Principle #2: Preserve original and historic materials over replacement.

Preserving original and historic building materials and architectural features serves to maintain a historic building's authenticity and character. It also helps to reduce demolition and debris waste from entering the landfill. Replacement of materials and features should only occur upon significant evidence of deterioration that compromises structural integrity. Implement in-kind material replacement first before considering appropriate substitutes compatible in size, form, profile, texture, and durability.

Principle #3: Undertake project planning and seek professional consultation when necessary.

The maintenance and repair of historic building materials, such as brick and stucco, and important architectural features, including roofs, porches, and foundations, often requires the assistance of professional contractors and craftspeople. Building owners should not hesitate to employ architects and other design professionals in the proper planning for preservation and rehabilitation efforts.

Principle #4: Respect changes over time.

Some building materials and architectural elements may not be original to the building but have achieved their own significance and value over time. Respect, preserve, and rehabilitate those changes or alterations if they contribute to a building's history, character and authenticity.

Principle #5: Recognize all buildings are products of their own time.

Each building is a record of its time, documenting the social, cultural, and economic forces that shaped the development of communities, districts, and neighborhoods. Avoid any changes or alterations that create a sense of false history.



144 N Wilbur • Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District
Original materials and architectural features should be preserved to maintain a building's character.

Guidelines for Preservation, Restoration & Rehabilitation

3.1 Character Defining Features

Character defining features help convey the historic and architectural significance of historic properties and should be preserved (Fig 3.1).

3.1.1 - Maintain character defining features

- Distinctive materials or character-defining features should not be removed.
- Changes to spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- Maintain character-defining landscaping, including but not limited to materials, location and size. If significant vegetation is removed, replacement may be required.
- Do not add features that were not part of the historic structure.

3.1.2 - Repair, rather than replace character-defining features

- Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, and texture.
- Use the same material as the historic feature. An alternative material may be considered if it has a size, shape, texture and finish that conveys the visual appearance of the historic feature, or is located in a place that is hidden from view.

Examples of character defining features:

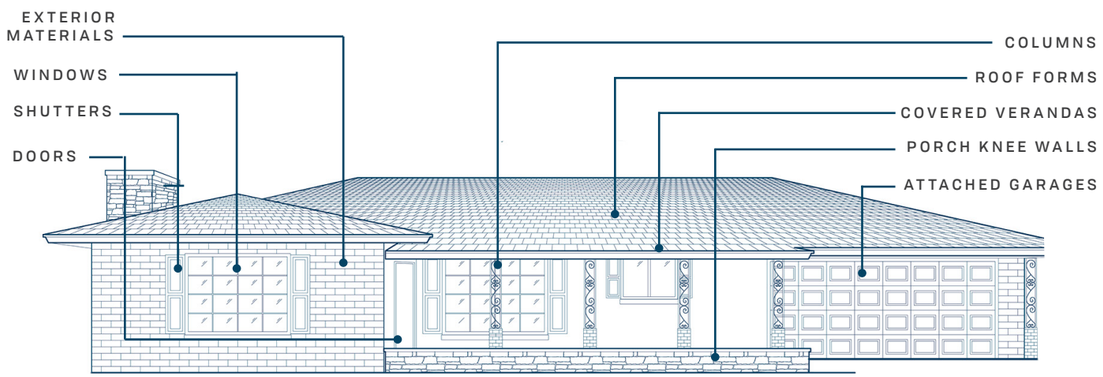


454 E 1st Ave. • Temple Historic District
The roof form, dormer vent, brick façade, bay window, and chimney are character defining features of this house.



855 E 2nd St. • Fraser Fields Historic District
The roof form, ribbon windows, and exterior materials are character defining features of this house.

Figure 3.1 Examples of Character Defining Features



3.2 Materials and Finishes

Historic materials should be preserved in place. If the material is damaged, repair should first be considered. If repair is not feasible, the limited replacement of a material that matches the historic material should be considered. Historic building materials should never be covered or subjected to harsh cleaning treatments.

3.2.1 - Building Material Maintenance

- Protect historic building materials from deterioration.
- Do not remove historic materials that are in good condition.
- Do not use harsh cleaning methods, which can inhibit the function and/or appearance of the historic material.

3.2.2 - Material Repair and Replacement

- Repair rather than replace original materials when possible.
- Repair deteriorated building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the material.
- Replace only those materials that are deteriorated, and beyond reasonable repair.
- Replace only the amount of material that is beyond repair.
- Use only replacement materials that are similar in scale, finish and character to the historic material.
- Do not replace building materials, such as masonry and wood siding, with alternative or imitation materials, unless no other option is available.



The Dutchman repair method allows for installation of new wood while preserving the historic wood.



Regular maintenance of wood siding prevents deterioration over time.



Adobe, one of the oldest building materials found in Mesa, is most commonly seen on Pueblo Revival architecture.



Typical historic masonry materials in Mesa include concrete block and brick. Pictured is decorative brick, known as raked header bond pattern.



Stucco is a common historic material on many of Mesa's residential dwellings.

Lehi Brick Kiln Company

Founded by George Mason Tiffany in the 1880s, the Lehi Brick Kiln Company met the need for a more durable building construction material for the fledgling Lehi and Mesa settlements, becoming the leading local brick manufacturer by the turn of the 20th century.

The Kiln Company's bricks helped construct several of Mesa's earliest buildings, including many commercial buildings along Main Street and the still-standing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) Temple.

Since the Company fired the bricks at a low temperature, they are generally softer in strength and composition and therefore require special care in their maintenance, repair, and preservation. Avoid using any harsh and abrasive cleaning methods, as well as any hard or Portland cement-based mortar when repointing.

Superlite Block Company

Manufactured by the Superlite Block Company, the Superlite concrete masonry unit (CMU) was used in the construction of many homes throughout the Phoenix area during the mid-20th century.

Founded in 1944 as the Builders Supply Corporation, the name was officially changed to Superlite Block Company around 1960. Superlite CMUs, including concrete breeze blocks, are a combination of sand, Portland cement, and volcanic scoria, mined in Winona, Arizona.

In addition to its use as a structural and finish material, Superlite created decorative blocks, popular in the 1950s and 1960s, with see-through patterns used in block fence walls, as building screens, and as sunscreens near entryways. Many Mid-Century Modern and Ranch houses, as well as commercial and institutional buildings in Mesa feature Superlite CMU construction.



The Sirrine House, located at 160 N Center St. within the West 2nd St Historic District, is constructed of Lehi Brick.

3.3 Windows

Windows, window openings, and window elements are primary architectural features and dominant visual features of historic buildings (Fig 3.2). Historic windows are representative of a building's craftsmanship and design, making them worthy of preservation.

Historic windows are made primarily of wood or metal (aluminum or steel) and come in various configurations such as single- or double-hung sash windows, single- or multi-light fixed picture windows, casement windows, and awning windows (Fig 3.3).

Typcially, windows located on a historic building's façade have more formal window pattern arrangements and are generally constructed of more durable, long-lasting materials and of higher quality than modern replacements.

Figure 3.3 Window Types

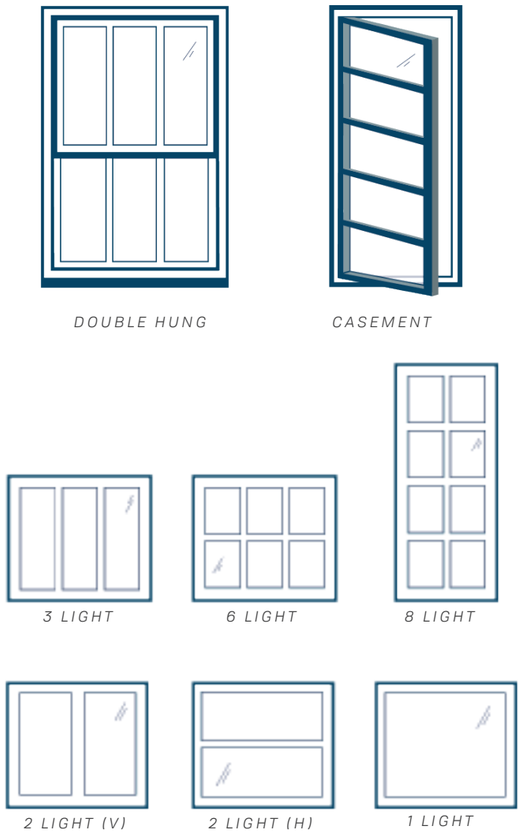
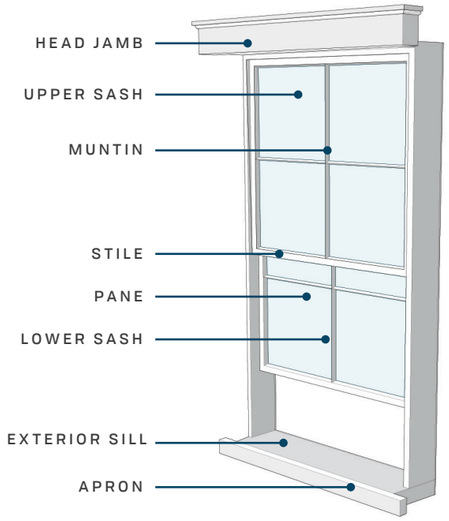


Figure 3.2 Common Window Elements



3.3.1 - Window Preservation

- Retain and preserve all historic wood and steel windows, including their size, glazing, opening size, and configurations, location, and materials.



151 N Wilbur St • Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District
Avoid removing original or historic windows.



106 N Fraser Dr • Fraser Fields Historic District
This house retains its historic windows.

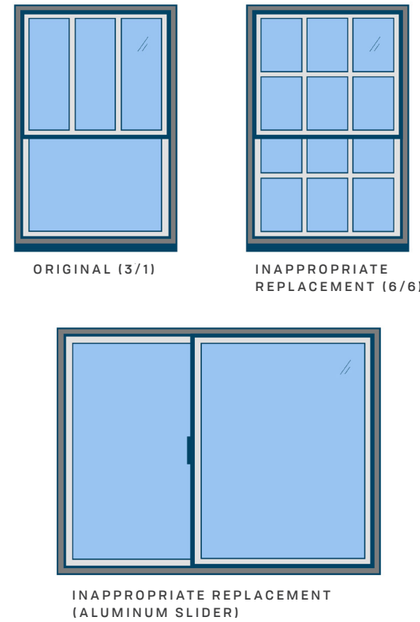
3.3.2 - Window Maintenance and Repair

- The number, size, and location of windows should be preserved. Filling in or covering existing windows should be avoided.
- Preserve all historic window features including the frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, shutters, and window pane configurations.
- Restore altered window openings to their historic configuration.
- Do not alter a window frame to accommodate an air conditioner unit on the primary elevation.
- If necessary, install interior storm windows to preserve exterior appearance.
- When interior storm windows are not feasible, exterior storm windows may be appropriate.

3.3.3 - Window Replacement or Reflective Film

- If window replacement is necessary, new windows should match the originals in materials, style, configuration, and dimensions (Fig 3.4).
- When a window is damaged beyond repair, modern replacements may be appropriate.
- Maintain the historic size, shape, and number of panes.
- Match the profile of the sash, muntins, and its components to the historic window, including the depth of the sash, which may step back to the plane of the glass in several increments. Historic windows were typically inset (while modern windows are flush mount), and this is considered a character-defining element of historic buildings.
- The use of interior muntins (window divides located between the glass) is not appropriate.
- The use of vinyl and unfinished metals as window replacement materials should be avoided.
- The use of metallic or reflective window glazing or film is not appropriate.
- Reducing or increasing a historic opening to accommodate a different sized window is not appropriate and should be avoided.

Figure 3.4 Appropriate Window Replacement





Irving School • 155 N Center St.
Windows maintain historic features, size, shape, and number of panes.

3.4 Doors and Entries

Doors, door openings, and door surrounds help to convey the overall proportion, scale, and character of a particular property or architectural style. The design, materials, and location of historic doors and entries should be preserved.

3.4.1 - Entrance Maintenance and Repair

- Maintain and repair original doors rather than replace when possible.
- Preserve historic and decorative features, including door frames, sidelights, sills, heads, jambs, moldings, detailing, panels, mullions, etc. (Fig 3. 5).
- Do not alter the historic size and shape of a door opening.

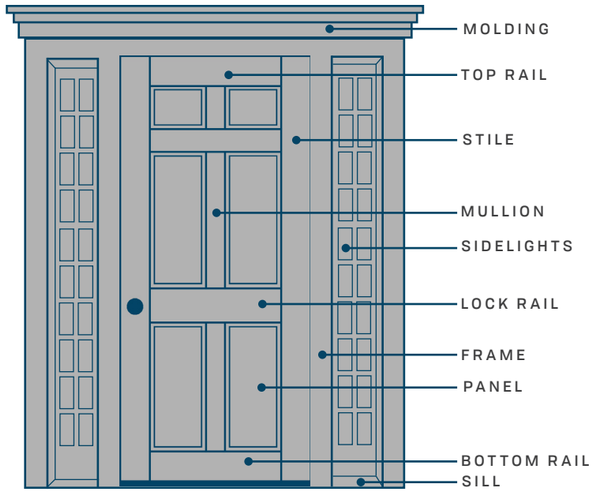


146 N Fraser Dr • Fraser Fields District
Original and historic doors help to convey the style of the house, like in this mid-century example.



560 N Emerson
The sidelight adjacent to the door is a significant architectural feature and should be preserved.

Figure 3.5 Common Door Elements



3.4.2 - Entrance Replacement

- When a door is damaged beyond repair, replacement doors should match the original in dimension, materials, and design.
- Do not change the historic location of or add new door openings on primary façades.
- Do not fill in or cover historic door openings.

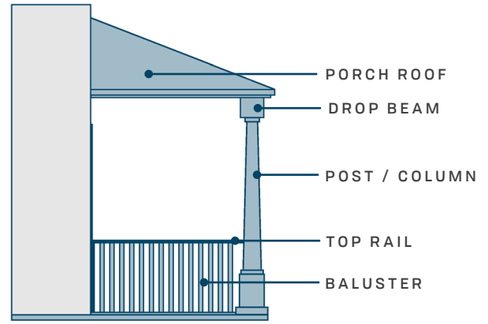
3.5 Porches

A porch is one of the most important character-defining features of a façade. A porch provides visual interest to a building and shelter from the elements. Additionally, porches help define building scale and establish a social hierarchy of space from the street to the interior of a house.

3.5.1 - Preserve Original Porches

- Do not remove an original porch from a building.
- Porches should be preserved in their original character and form.
- Preserve the existing height, location, shape, details, and posts.
- Replace missing features and repair damaged features to match existing historic features.
- Maintain the overall composition when replacing damaged or missing porch elements (Fig 3.6).
- Do not add ornamentation or decoration to a porch if it was not historically present or if the element is inconsistent with the style of the building.

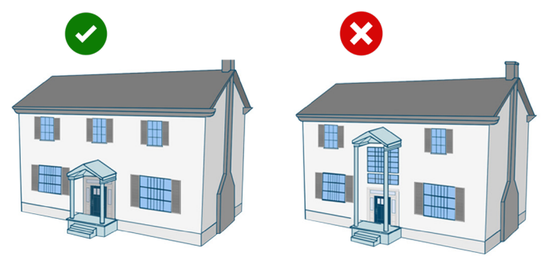
Figure 3.6 Common Porch Elements



3.5.2 - Porch Replacement

- When porch reconstruction or replacement is necessary, it should be similar in character, design, scale, and materials to those traditionally seen in the building's architectural style.
- Design a replacement porch to be appropriate in relation to the overall scale and architectural style of the primary structure based on historic photographic evidence or other documentation (Fig 3.7).
- Porches should not be added to a primary façade based on conjecture or if one was not historically present.

Figure 3.7 Porch Scale and Form



Porches should be compatible in size and scale with the primary structure.

Examples of historic porches throughout Mesa:



124 W 1st St. • West 2nd Street Historic District



205 S Mesa Dr. • Temple Historic District



236 N Robson • Robson Historic District



234 N Fraser Dr. • Fraser Fields Historic District

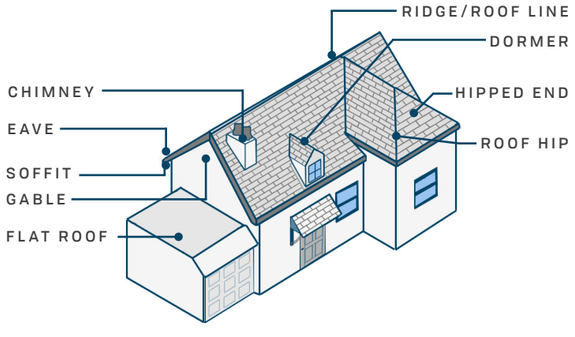
3.6 Historic Roofs

The roof is among the most visually prominent features of a house and helps to define its architectural character. The great variety of roof shapes, forms, and materials found in Mesa, along with elements such as chimneys, turrets, crestings, and dormers, gives the City's historic districts and neighborhoods great visual interest (Fig 3.8).

3.6.1 - Roof Repair and Replacement

- Preserve the form, materials, and features of an original historic roof.
- Maintain the ridge line and orientation of the roof as seen from the street.
- Maintain existing roof overhangs because they contribute to the building's historic character and scale.
- Avoid altering the angle (pitch/slope) of a historic roof.
- Do not cut back or alter exposed roof rafters and soffits that contribute to the building's historic character and scale.
- Preserve functional and decorative roof features, including original dormers, chimneys and eaves, especially when they are character-defining elements of the structure (Fig 3.9).

Figure 3.9 Common Roof Elements





2230 E Grandview St. • Robert Scott House
The hipped roof with deep eaves is an important visual element of this historic home.

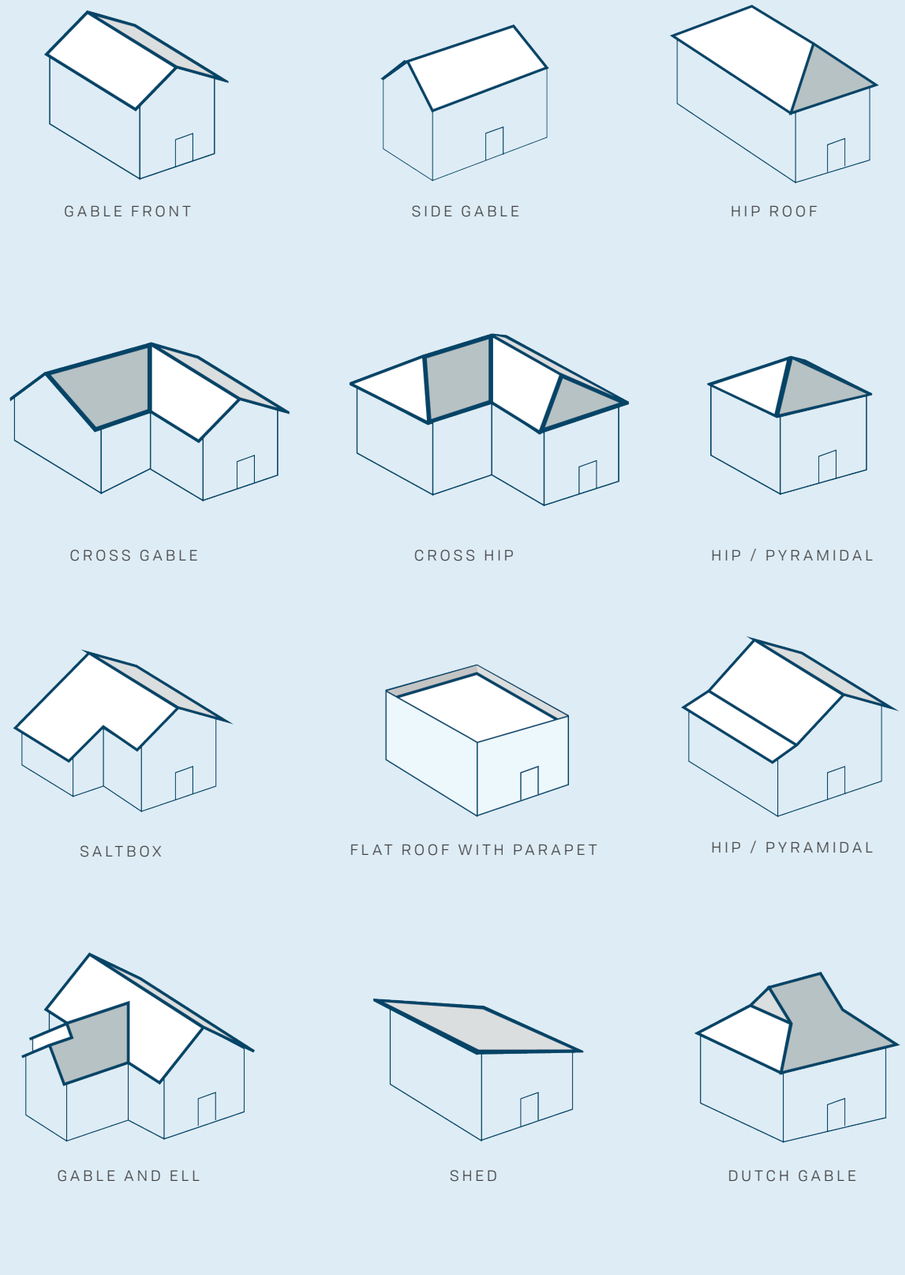


460 N Grand • Evergreen District
This example retains its historic tile roof.



549 N Robson • Evergreen District
The prominent stone chimney is a significant architectural feature on this house.

Figure 3.8 Roof Forms



3.7 Exposed Foundations

A historic building foundation contributes to the character of a historic structure and should be preserved. Altering or replacing historic foundations is discouraged. However, it may be necessary to replace historic foundation walls with compatible materials where a historic foundation is deteriorated beyond repair.

3.7.1 - Foundation Repair and Replacement

- Repair and rehabilitate exposed foundations in order to maintain a building's structural integrity.
- Re-point historic masonry foundations to match the historic design. Use historically sensitive and compatible mortar on brick foundations (and/or façades) or concrete mortar on brick foundations (or façades). Avoid hard masonry cements or concrete.
- Design landscaping and other site features to keep water from collecting near the foundation.
- Do not cover a historic foundation with newer siding material.
- Avoid installing windows, window wells or an access door on the front façade of a historic foundation.
- Replace a foundation using new material that is similar in character to the historic foundation.



541 N Grand • Evergreen District
The foundation wall shown here uses different materials to visually distinguish it from the main wall.

3.8 Carports and Garages

3.8.1 - Carport and Garage Preservation

- Preserve and maintain historic carport and garage elements and architectural features, including garage doors, walls and wall materials, piers, posts, detailing and ornamentation, soffit or fascia vents, and roof and roof shape.

3.8.2 - Carport and Garage Repair and Replacement

- Replace garage and access doors with ones that are appropriate to the style of the house and with similar in-kind materials.



437 N Macdonald • Evergreen District
Carports, like the one shown here, are common architectural features in Mesa's historic districts.

3.9 Painting Historic Buildings

Historically, wood surfaces on the exterior of a building were painted to protect them from weathering. Concrete and stucco surfaces were sometimes painted as well. Some paints or sealers advertised as water-repellent, waterproof, or maintenance-free can damage historic houses by trapping moisture inside the walls. These products should not be applied to historic building materials.

- Painting unpainted brick is not permitted without a COA, as doing so can cause damage by trapping moisture inside the brick and lead to severe structural deterioration.
- The natural color and texture of masonry are character-defining features which would be covered by paint.
- Previously painted masonry and all non-masonry surfaces can be painted without a COA.

3.10 Landscaping and Fences

Landscape design elements incorporate both the public and private realms in historic districts and sites, including large mature trees, tree-lined streets and medians, street lighting, sidewalks, paths, driveways, front lawns, gardens and plantings, fences, and other yard features. Landscape preservation and rehabilitation serve to maintain and enhance the character and authenticity of Mesa's historic neighborhoods and districts.

3.10.1 - Landscape Maintenance and Replacement

- Maintain and preserve existing character-defining landscape elements, including mature trees, whenever possible.
- New landscaping should be installed to complement the existing character of the house.
- Do not replace front lawns with impervious hardscape materials.
- Installation of artificial turf in areas visible from the street should be avoided.
- Use native or desert plants and xeriscaping techniques where appropriate to reduce the need for irrigation. Select plant materials with character, growth, and habitat requirements similar to others found in the neighborhood.

3.10.2 - Fence and Wall Maintenance and Repair

- Maintain original or historic walls, specifically those constructed of decorative concrete masonry units or from breeze block.
- Replace damaged elements with in-kind materials.



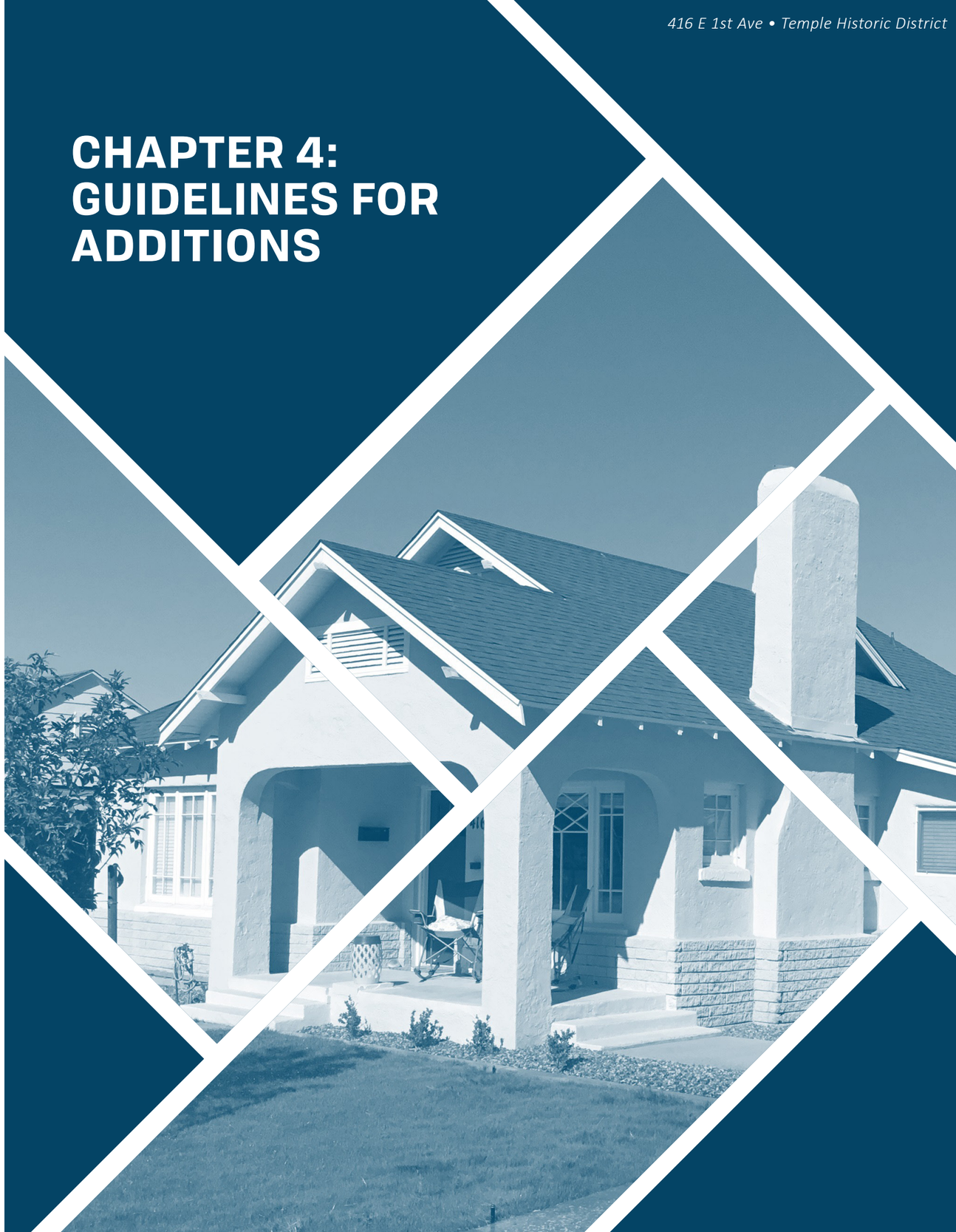
Historic fences and walls, like these examples above, should be maintained and repaired.



100 block of N Robson • West 2nd Street Historic District
This tree-lined median is a significant character-defining feature of the West 2nd Street Historic District.

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CHAPTER 4: GUIDELINES FOR ADDITIONS



Principles for Additions

Design guidelines require interpretation and good judgment to ensure that the proposed project is compatible with the context area. Each project is considered on its own merits; even if the same addition were proposed for similar properties within the historic district, differences in the existing structures and the context areas for those various locations could result in different decisions regarding compatibility.

Because contributing structures are the most important buildings in the historic district, they must remain prominent. That means that an addition should be visually subordinate, or secondary, to the original contributing building. This can be achieved by limiting the addition's size, visibility from the street, and the complexity of its design. Additions to noncontributing structures are also required to be compatible with the scale and proportion of the contributing buildings in the context area. This applies to the building overall, as well as to individual building elements.

Additions in historic districts should be designed carefully with the following considerations in mind:

- Size - the dimensions of a building or structure
- Scale - the proportional relationship between the size of the building and its different elements
- Massing - the overall shape and form of the building
- Fenestration - the placement, style, and materials of windows and doors
- Rhythm - the relationship of solids and voids, fenestration, recesses, and projections
- Siting - addition should be setback from the facade or located at the rear of the existing building
- Materials - the materials do not have to match but should be compatible
- Context - the overall relationship of the building and project to its surroundings

In addition to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, property owners and design professionals should follow the general principles outlined below.

Principle #1: Ensure the integrity of existing historic buildings when considering new additions.

Any new addition must respect and be harmonious with a historic building's materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and siting to preserve and maintain its historic and architectural integrity. New additions shall not destroy historic building materials that characterize the historic property.

The use of complementary, but different, materials is the preferred way to visually contrast additions from original construction. New additions must differentiate from the historic building so that the building's architectural change and evolution over time is visible.

Principle #2: Promote new addition design reflective of its time.

Additions should be of their time and not project a sense of false history with replicated features and ornamentation of past historic architectural styles. Instead, historic styles may inspire or provide identifiable design cues for additions.

Principle #3: Use contemporary materials and design creativity for additions.

When designing additions, use contemporary building materials and architectural detailing in creative ways that convey the dwelling or building is of new construction. This construction may incorporate abstract references to the architectural styles and building types that are compatible within its immediate setting or neighborhood.

Principle #4: Design additions without damaging historic materials.

Design and undertake any additions to historic buildings in historic districts in a manner that, if removed in the future, would not impact or affect historic building materials, the integrity of historic buildings, or the surrounding site or neighborhood.

Guidelines for Additions

4.1 Addition Placement

For many properties, an addition to the rear or side of the historic building is the best approach to gain additional living area. A compatible addition allows the general appearance and character defining features of the historic building to be retained and preserved, especially when viewed from key public vantage points.

4.1.1 - Location of an Addition

- The addition should be subordinate to the original structure.
- Additions should have minimal visual impact to the existing structure.
- An addition should be the same height or lower than the existing structure whenever possible.
- Place an addition to the rear or below grade of the original structure whenever possible.
- Consider a compatible side addition if a rear addition is not possible (Fig 4.1).

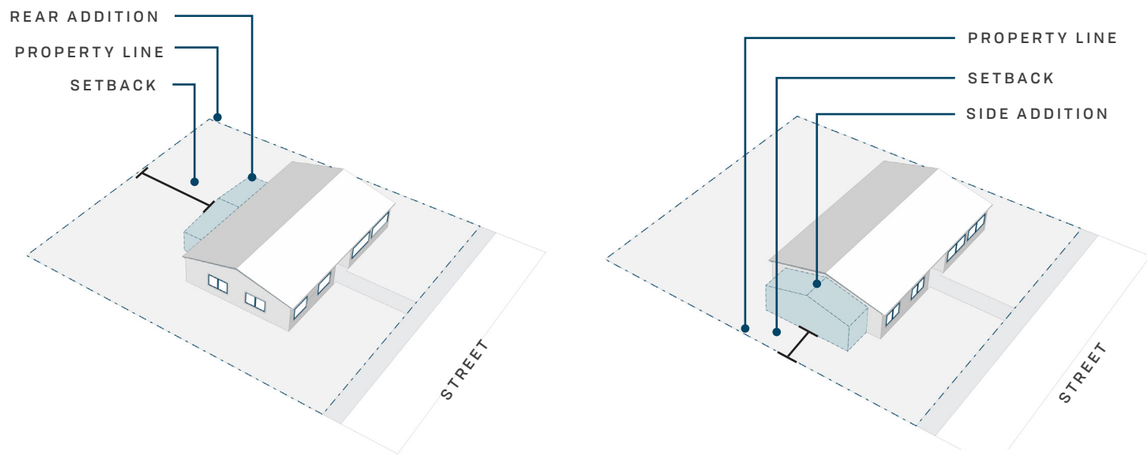
4.1.2 - Building Footprint and Lot Consistency

- The footprint of the addition should be compatible with the size of the lot, yard, and setback characteristics of the neighborhood.
- The location of the addition should be compatible with the character of neighboring properties.
- Retain original open space at the front and sides of the existing structure.
- Avoid the excessive loss of existing open space.

4.1.3 - Addition of Second Story

- Second-story additions should only be considered in districts where homes were originally constructed with two stories.
- When appropriate, two-story additions proposed to a one-story structure should be set back and located behind the original existing historic structure.
- Second-story additions should not result in the removal of historic material or character defining features.
- Second-story additions are generally not appropriate for most historic homes as they adversely impact the historic architectural integrity, character, and massing of the structure and district.

Figure 4.1: Side and Rear Residential Additions





136 W 2nd St. • West 2nd Street Historic District
Example of a historic one-story house with an early second floor addition.



48 N Robson
Side addition and Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) shown on the right of this 1.5-story Craftsman.



416 E 1st Ave. • Temple Historic District
The new addition, shown here on the left, respects the historic building's materials, size, scale, and proportion.

4.2 Design of an Addition

Additions should be designed to be compatible with the context of the historic neighborhood. Projects should consider how the new addition will impact the integrity of the existing historic building and district.

In addition to contextual compatibility, the addition must differentiate in some way from the historic building to appropriately convey change and evolution over time. This visually communicates that the new addition is separate from the historic building while appearing both compatibile in scale and true to its age.

4.2.1 - Contextual Design

- Additions should be recognized as new construction, while respecting key features of the historic structure and architectural characteristics of the surrounding block and neighborhood.
- An addition should not project a sense of false history with replicative ornamentation; details on additions should be reflective of existing historic characteristics but remain simplified.
- Additions may include characteristic features that are common to the surrounding structures and neighborhood block.
- Massing and scale of the addition should be compatible with surrounding historic structures within the district.
- At a minimum, a design should be neutral and not detract from the original character, features, scale, and context of the historic structure.

4.2.2 - Differentiation

- Differentiate the new addition from the historic house by insetting the addition from the main wall plane of the historic building.
- Provide a change, even if subtle, in building materials so the addition is visually distinct from the historic home.
- Install trim or other architectural detailing to clearly delineate a distinction between the historic building and addition.
- Use a simplified interpretation of historic designs found in the neighborhood or use a contemporary design that is compatible with historic siting, massing, and building forms found in the neighborhood.

4.2.3 - Architectural Style of Additions

- Design new additions to respect the historic house's architectural style and character-defining features.
- Design additions to be compatible with the scale, massing, and rhythm of the historic building. Additions should be subordinate to the original building.
- Do not mimic the historic features, but use more contemporary details, such as window moldings and door surrounds, to create interest and convey that the addition is modern construction.

4.2.4 - Addition Roofing

- The roof of an addition may be the same or be distinguished from the original by an overall lower ridge height or a varied roof pitch.
- New roofing material may be the same as existing or be compatible in appearance.



1123 W 2nd Pl
Differentiate additions through a setback or change in height as seen above.

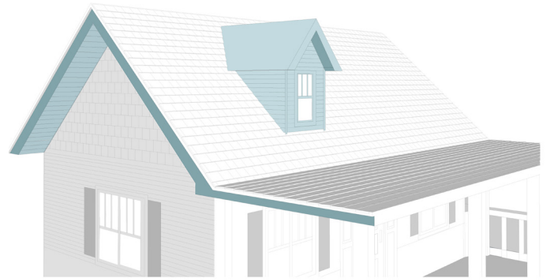


159 N Macdonald • West 2nd Street Historic District
Differentiate additions through a setback or change in height as seen above.

4.2.5 - Dormer Design

- New dormers should not be constructed on the front elevation.
- Dormer height should not extend above the existing ridge line (Fig 4.2).
- Locate new dormers to the rear and/or the side (set back from the façade).

Figure 4.2: New Dormer



4.2.6 - Porch Addition

- New porches should be secondary and subordinate to a historic house's main and side elevations in terms of scale and proportions. New porches should not be constructed on the front without substantiation of prior existence.
- A missing porch should be reconstructed based on documentation if available, and be in keeping with the house's architectural style.
- A new porch must be appropriate to the architectural style and building type of the historic home.

4.2.7 - Carport or Garage Addition

- Design and construct new carport and garage additions using compatible materials as found on the primary house or homes within the neighborhood.
- Do not extend carports beyond the front plane of the house or into the uniform setback of the neighborhood.
- New carports should reflect the general roof shape of the home and conform to the uniform setback of the neighborhood.



809 W Main St. • Alma Ward Meeting House
Use materials in new fencing and fence gates that are compatible with the historic property.

4.3 Other Items

4.3.1 - Fences and Walls

- New fences and walls should complement the historic building's architectural style and the neighborhood's overall historic character.
- Use materials such as wood, brick, metal, or, in some cases, concrete masonry units that are compatible with the materials and scale of the property and surrounding neighborhood.
- Use high-quality and long-lasting materials and avoid vinyl or plastic fencing.
- Front yard fences should be limited to 3½ feet in height and should not obscure the view of the historic structure.



228 W 9th Pl. N
A change in wall plane identifies the garage as an addition.

4.3.2 - Mechanical Equipment

- Place mechanical equipment where it is not visible from the street or public right-of-way.
- Place rooftop mechanical equipment on the rear roof sloped away from the street and public right-of-way.
- Mechanical equipment, whether on a roof, the side of a building, or on the ground, should be screened from public view.
- If mechanical equipment cannot be placed in a suitable location, use appropriate screening techniques like privacy fencing, walls, or vegetation, ensuring screening materials are compatible with the primary house and historic district.
- Equipment enclosures should be painted the same color as predominantly found on the house.

4.3.3 - Solar Panels

- Minimize visual impacts by locating solar panels back from the front façade on the primary building.
- Avoid placing solar panels in locations that obscure characteristic architectural features and details or change the overall character of the dwelling or building.
- Install solar panels on additions or detached outbuildings when possible.
- Locate solar panels where they will not damage significant features or materials and install panels in such a way that they can be removed in the future.



20 S Macdonald
Mechanical equipment placed on the 1-story rear addition is not visible from the street.



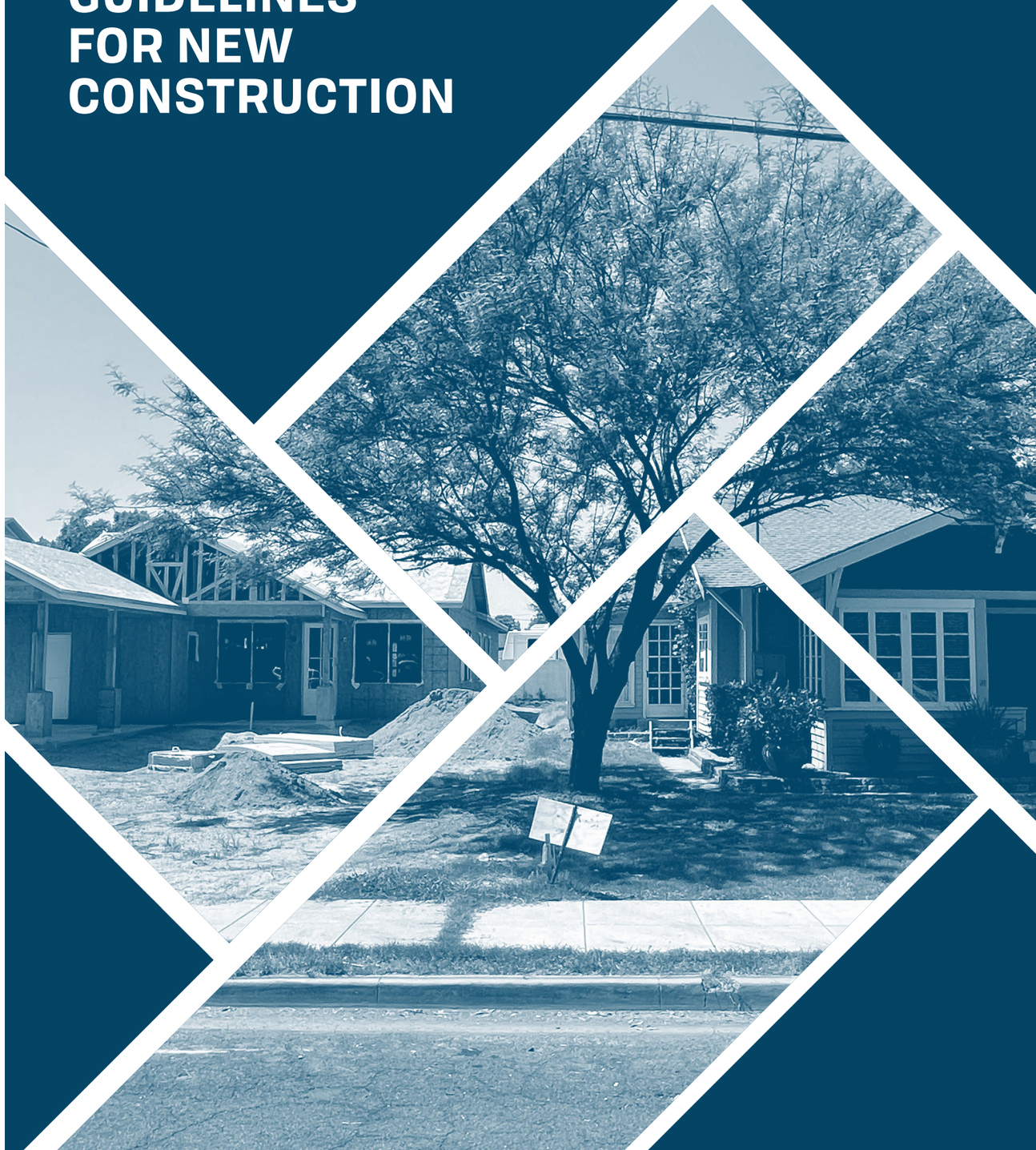
55 N Meadow Lane • West Side-Clark Addition
Locate mechanical equipment on a rear roof slope away from the street.



206 N Lebaron • Robson Historic District
The Read House, the oldest in the Robson Historic District, has mechanical equipment housed in the rear of the building, and not visible from the street.

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CHAPTER 5: GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION



Principles for New Construction

New construction in a historic district means an entirely new building or structure, rather than an addition. The construction of any new building or structure within a historic district requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.

These guidelines for new construction are not aimed at preventing change, dictating a particular architectural style, or an exact historic duplication. Rather, the guidelines aim to ensure that new buildings achieve compatibility with existing historic buildings that define the character of the historic district in which it is located.

New construction in a historic district should be "of its own time." The design should not mimic existing historic buildings and, with focus on overall design elements, can be compatible with the historic district even when more contemporary in design and construction.

New construction in historic districts should be designed carefully to respect the existing patterns and context of its district with the following considerations in mind:

- Size - the dimensions of a building or structure
- Scale - the proportional relationship between the size of the building and its different elements
- Massing - the overall shape and form of the building
- Fenestration - the placement, style, and materials of windows and doors
- Rhythm - the relationship of solids and voids, fenestration, recesses, and projections
- Setback- how far a building, structure, or element is placed from a road, sidewalk, or property line
- Materials - the new materials do not have to match but should be compatible with the building's context
- Context - the overall relationship of the building and project to its surroundings

In addition to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, property owners and design professionals should follow the general principles outlined below.

Principle #1: Ensure the integrity of the historic district buildings when considering new construction.

In order to preserve and maintain the historic and architectural integrity of the district, the materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and siting of any new buildings must respect and be harmonious with other structures within the historic district. The use of complementary, but differentiated, materials is the preferred way to visually differentiate new construction from original construction.

Principle #2: Promote new construction design reflective of its time.

New construction should be of its time and not project a sense of false history with the exact replication of features and ornamentation of past historic architectural styles. Instead, historic styles may inspire or provide identifiable design cues for additions and new construction within historic districts and landmarks.

Principle #3: Use contemporary materials and design creativity for new construction.

When designing new infill construction, use contemporary building materials and architectural detailing in creative ways that convey the building or structure is of new construction. New construction may incorporate abstract references to the architectural styles and property type that are also compatible within its immediate setting or neighborhood.

Principle #4: Design new construction without damaging surrounding site or neighborhood.

Design and undertake new construction in historic districts in a manner that if removed in the future would not impact or affect the integrity of the surrounding site or neighborhood.

Guidelines for New Construction

5.1 New Construction Design

5.1.1 - Building Height

- New residential buildings should be designed with heights and massing compatible with historic buildings in the district.
- Design a new building to be within the height range of the lowest and tallest heights of the buildings in the surrounding historic district.
- When a new building must exceed the height of adjacent homes by one story or less, use wall articulation or setbacks in massing to provide an appropriate transition.

5.1.2 - Building Scale

- Locate and proportion building features to reference similar features on historic buildings. For example, match window, porch and door to those on nearby historic buildings.

5.1.3 - Building and Entrance Orientation

- Orient a new building to be compatible with historic buildings found in the block and neighborhood (Fig 5.1).
- Main entrances should be placed according to the orientation of other historic buildings within the historic district.
- In traditional residential neighborhoods, main entrances are often oriented to the primary street.

5.1.4 - Materials

- New residential dwellings should utilize construction materials consistent with adjacent homes and those found in the historic district.
- Use materials that are similar in scale, proportion, texture, and finish to existing historic structures within the district.
- Variation in material type, color and texture is encouraged for new construction as long as the materials are complementary or compatible with those of adjacent homes.
- Contemporary high-quality materials such as fiber cement board or simulated stone veneer may be appropriate in some locations if they are visually similar to materials found in adjacent homes.
- A new residential building should use roofing materials, roof lines and roof profiles compatible in design and appearance with adjacent homes.

5.1.5 - Doors and Windows

- Windows and doors are important character defining features of historic and new buildings. They provide a sense of scale and visual interest to the composition of a façade. These elements should be designed to be compatible with the surrounding context and their materials should be durable.

Figure 5.1 Building and Entrance Orientation





132 N Wilbur • Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District
New construction, shown on the left, is compatible in scale.



727 N Grand • Evergreen Historic District
The design of a new building, as shown here, should be compatible with surrounding buildings on the block.

5.1.7 - Door and Window Proportions

- Install doors, trim, windows, and any architectural detailing at the same proportion as those on the existing building within adjacent homes.

5.1.8 - Door and Window Design

- Install windows, doors, and other features to be compatible with the historic context.
- Use simplified configurations of historic doors rather than replicating a particular historic door exactly.
- Maintain a similar solid-to-void ratio between window/door openings and solid wall surfaces on walls that will be visible from the street.
- Select windows and doors that are similar in scale and proportion to those in the context area. Other sizes and shapes may also be acceptable.

5.1.9 - Porch Design

- Keep the scale, proportion, and character of the new porch compatible with the historic structures within the district.
- If houses within the district predominantly feature front porches, any new construction should also feature a functional front porch.
- Use materials that are similar in scale, proportion, texture, and finish to existing porches within the district.

5.2 Accessory Dwelling Units and Other Detached Buildings or Structures

5.2.1 - Location

- Detached buildings and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) should be located at or near the rear of the property, generally out of view from the right-of-way.
- If attaching an ADU to the rear of the main house, do not remove or destroy original or historic architectural features and materials.

5.2.2 - Scale

- Detached garages, accessory buildings and ADUs should be subordinate to the primary historic building in terms of scale, massing, and character.
- Design the mass, form, and roof shape of a new accessory building and/or ADUs to be compatible with the primary building and surrounding historic context.

5.2.3 - Design

- New accessory buildings and ADUs should use materials that are compatible in scale, proportion, texture, and finish to materials of the primary building and the surrounding buildings within the historic district.
- Use simplified versions of the primary building's features or other complementary details found in the surrounding historic district rather than duplicating exactly.



131 N Pasadena • Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District
The design and placement of an ADU should be compatible with, and subordinate to, the main dwelling.

5.3 Other Items

5.3.1 - Fences and Walls

- New fences and walls should complement the historic building's architectural style and the neighborhood's overall historic character.
- Use materials such as wood, brick, wrought iron or, in some cases, concrete masonry units that are compatible with the materials and scale of the property and surrounding neighborhood.
- Use high-quality and long-lasting materials and avoid vinyl or plastic fencing.
- Front yard fences should be limited to 3½ feet in height and should not obscure the view of the historic structure.



Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District
New concrete wall with breezeblock is compatible with the historic wall behind it.

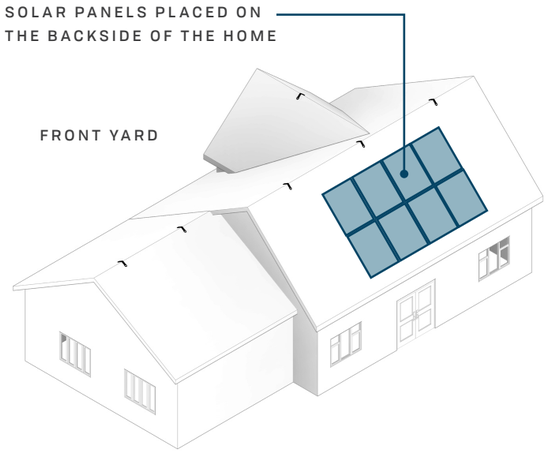
5.3.2 - Mechanical Equipment

- Place mechanical equipment where it is not visible from the street or public right-of-way.
- Place rooftop mechanical equipment on the rear roof sloped away from the street and right-of-way.
- Mechanical equipment, whether on a roof, the side of a building, or on the ground, should be screened from public view.
- If mechanical equipment cannot be placed in a suitable location, use appropriate screening techniques like privacy fencing, walls, or vegetation, ensuring screening materials are compatible with the primary house and historic district.
- Equipment enclosures should be painted the same color as predominantly found on the house.

5.3.3 - Solar Panels

- Minimize visual impacts by locating solar panels back from the front façade on the primary building.
- Avoid placing solar panels in locations that obscure characteristic architectural features and details or change the overall character of the dwelling or building.
- Install solar panels on additions or detached buildings when possible.
- Locate solar panels where they will not damage significant features or materials and install panels in a way that they can be removed in the future.

Figure 5.2: Solar Panel Placement



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Diving Lady • Starlite Motel

CHAPTER 6: GUIDELINES FOR HISTORIC SIGNAGE

Historic Signage Preservation and Principles

Following the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, these guidelines emphasize identifying, retaining, and preserving historic signs through routine inspection and maintenance, extending their lifespans, and avoiding future replacement. In addition, recommendations for installing new signs compatible with the character of historic buildings and streetscapes in Mesa are provided.

Although these guidelines provide information to property owners, design professionals, and other decision-makers, they do not intend to substitute consultation with qualified historic sign experts and fabricators, design professionals, preservation architects, landscape architects, and/or contractors when planning and executing a rehabilitation project.

Historically Designated Signs on the Mesa Historic Sign Register need to be maintained and/or repaired consistent with the Historic Preservation Board's findings and conditions of approval, and modifications are subject to the COA review process. A benefit of being listed on the Mesa Historic Sign Register is that the historic signage does not count toward the total allowable sign area for the property on which it is located.

In addition to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties,* property owners and design professionals should follow these principles in the maintenance and preservation of historic signs, as well as the design and installation of new signage.



Historic Buckhorn Baths Motel Entry Signage

Principle #1: Design signage compatible with historic building and streetscape character.

Signage is an important component of a historic commercial building. Collectively, in a downtown environment, historic signs convey a sense of place, heritage and authenticity. New signs that are compatible with a commercial area's architecture and building period also improve overall streetscape design and character and contribute to a visually appealing pedestrian environment.

Principle #2: Preserve historic neon signs.

Beginning in the 1920s and extending through the 1950s, neon signs made a unique contribution to the character of Art Deco and Mid-Century commercial architecture in Mesa. Many businesses, including restaurants and diners, downtown retail establishments, and motels, utilized neon signs as advertising, and often incorporated such signs as part of the building's architectural design.

Maintaining and preserving neon signs in place, or protecting and storing them for future reuse, will ensure that these significant building and streetscape elements remain a part of Mesa's historic commercial landscape.

Principle #3: Preserve historic signs.

Beyond neon, typical historic sign types include painted wall signs, projecting blade signs, hanging signs, marquee signs, window lettering, awnings, roof signs, freestanding signs, and monument signs. Retention, repair, and rehabilitation is encouraged over replacement whenever feasible. Existing historic signs should be maintained in place and protected from removal or alteration that would diminish their historic character or obscure significant architectural features.

When adaptive reuse or code compliance requires modifications, alterations should be minimally invasive, reversible where possible, and compatible with the historic materials, scale, proportions, and design of the existing resource.

Guidelines for Historic Signage

6.1 About Historic Signs

Traditionally, most historic commercial buildings included one or more signs, sometimes applied to a storefront window, painted on a side elevation, placed on the wall surface above the storefront, or installed as a free-standing sign on the lot. Historic signs come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and materials, including wood, metal, masonry, and neon. Historic signs contribute to the historic character of older commercial properties and districts. Mesa's Historically Designated Signs must be 50 years or older, and retain an appearance that has remained substantially the same as its historically significant period.

6.2 Signage Types

Mesa's traditional commercial districts and historic neighborhoods contain a variety of signage types. The type of sign found on a historic commercial building, including its scale, materials, color, and location, plays an important role in reinforcing the character of the building and surrounding streetscape.

6.2.1 - Awning and Canopy Signs

Awnings and canopies are common features of historic commercial buildings used to provide shade over storefront windows and door openings. They also contribute to a building's overall visual interest and design. Awnings come in either fixed or retractable formats, slope away from the storefront, and are made of fabric materials.

Historically, most awnings were retractable. Canopies are typically one-story, fixed roofs constructed in metal and projecting over the storefront. In some cases, posts may support the canopy. The awning and canopy edge are common locations for signage.

6.2.2 - Wall-Mounted Signs

Wall-mounted signs are ideal for retail and other businesses in high-traffic traditional commercial areas; this type of signage is easily visible for pedestrians and those traveling by car or transit. Wall-mounted signs attach to a building façade facing the street, often in a sign band just above the storefront.



Passey Bond Insurance • 28 N Center St.
This sign exhibits mid-20th century design elements.



Milano Music Center • 38 W Main St.
An example of a wall-mounted sign in Downtown Mesa.

6.2.3 - Projecting Signs

Projecting signs, sometimes called blade signs, are perpendicular to the building façade, attached by poles, and mounted just above the storefront. Such signs feature wood, metal, and neon materials. Retain and preserve existing historic wall or projecting signs wherever feasible. Encourage the design and installation of such sign types to help enhance the streetscape environment, as well as the image and brands of local businesses.



Example of projecting historic signage at 28 S Macdonald. (Note: Lambs Shoe Repair sign was restored by Casa Copal in 2025)

6.2.4 - Ghost Signs

Particular consideration should be given to the preservation of “ghost signs,” which are faded or partially obscured historic painted advertisements or business signs that remain visible on exterior building walls. Ghost signs are significant as surviving historic artifacts that document earlier commercial activity, community development patterns, and historic graphic design practices. Preservation treatments for ghost signs should emphasize stabilization and conservation of remaining historic paint surfaces rather than over-restoration or complete repainting, in order to retain the aged character and authenticity of the feature.

Examples of ghost signs in Mesa:



Cummins, Kellis & Petrie Insurance Hand Painted Sign



Sunkist Building Warehouse



F.P. Nielson & Sons Grain Silos Sign

6.2.5 - Free-Standing Signs

While most historic commercial buildings found in traditional pedestrian-oriented downtown districts feature building-mounted signage, free-standing signs are common for commercial buildings and districts developed in the advent of the automobile. These auto-centric signs were a common feature of roadside architecture in the early 20th century and thereafter, most often found at motels, restaurants, and gas stations.

Free-standing signs may include signs projecting from poles or other structures, as well as those attached between posts. In Mesa, it is important to preserve these signage types that convey the city's significant automobile and tourism history.

6.2.5 - Window Signs

Window signs are attached or incorporated into commercial storefront windows or doors, and typically identify the business at the storefront level. Window signs often feature business logos and symbols, text, or some combination thereof to communicate information about a business and its services. Traditional window signs applied individual lettering to the interior or exterior glazing. Retaining and preserving historic window signs where they exist assist in communicating the building’s or business’s history. New window signs should be simple in design, cover a limited area to avoid visual clutter, and allow visibility into the storefront.



The Hambone Sports Bar & Grill, an example of a historic neon free-standing sign.

6.3 Guidelines for Preservation, Rehabilitation, and Design

6.3.1 - Historic Sign Preservation and Maintenance

Maintain and preserve historic signs, including ghost signs, window signs, wall-mounted, projecting signs, neon signs, and others that contribute to the historic and architectural character of Downtown Mesa and other districts and neighborhoods.

- Retain and repair historic signs, parts, and structures using like or in-kind materials.
- Do not repaint or paint over ghost signs to 'restore' them; if a ghost sign is deteriorating rapidly, consult with a historic sign expert and explore using a clear coat or sealant to preserve it.
- Illuminate historic wall-mounted and projecting signs using gooseneck or other lighting appropriate to the sign, storefront, and building.
- Reuse existing historic signage by restoring and retrofitting existing materials for updated messaging.
- Retain and carefully store historic signs which cannot remain in place for future use.

6.3.2 - New Signage Design

In general, create a signage plan for a historic commercial building based on any documentation and photographs of past signage types. Alternatively, base the signage plan on recommended placement, type of signage desired, and other recommendations made in this section.

- New signage design must respect the building’s architectural character, scale, proportions, storefront arrangement and openings, and the overall visual environment of the streetscape.
- Signs should identify the business tenant(s) using high quality graphics and materials.

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CHAPTER 7: MESA'S HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT



136 W 8th Pl • Flying Acres Historic District

Mesa's Historic Context

Understanding the significance of Mesa's historic buildings and neighborhoods requires placing them within the broader story of the community's evolution over time. Mesa's built environment reflects thousands of years of Native American occupation, the establishment of a permanent settlement by members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) in 1877-8, the continued growth of an agricultural community, and the city's transformation into a rapidly expanding suburban and urban center following World War II.

The following sections summarize a few illustrative themes important in Mesa's past that continue to shape the city's architectural character today. This context is not all encompassing; the city's history is diverse, complex, and cannot be told in a singular narrative. Links for additional learning and perspectives are provided throughout, and additional information regarding Mesa's cultural heritage can be found in Appendix E.

O'Odham and Piipash Communities

Archaeological evidence indicates a long history of Native American occupation in the Phoenix Basin, with sites dating back over ten thousand years. The lands that comprise present-day Mesa are culturally affiliated with the O'Odham, Piipaash, and their ancestors.

The Akimel O'Odham, who mainly reside on the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC), have existed in the region encompassing the Salt River Valley since time immemorial. Other cultural groups and Tribal Nations also maintain strong connections to Mesa and the surrounding region. The Pee-Posh, who primarily reside in the western portion of the GRIC, and the Xalychidom Piipaash, who primarily reside in the SRPMIC, have ancestral ties to the Colorado River and cultural traditions connecting them to lands along the lower Salt and middle Gila rivers that predate their historical migration to the area in the late 1700s.



Early irrigation canal (Pub. Everybody's Drug Co.)

Between approximately 400 and 1450 CE, ancestors of the modern O'Odham, referred to by archaeologists as Hohokam, developed a complex farming society throughout the Salt River Valley, with large settlements, such as Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki, and an extensive network of sophisticated irrigation canals. These Ancestral O'Odham communities produced elaborate material culture including pottery, basketry, stone tools, and shell jewelry, and featured villages with earthen architecture and agricultural systems carefully adapted to the Sonoran Desert.

O'Odham oral history and the archaeological record document continued cultural connections to the Salt River Valley after 1450 CE. During this period, settlements became smaller and shifted to more centralized villages along the middle Gila River as a result of conflict with Yavapai and Apache groups, among other environmental pressures.

These longstanding traditions of settlement, water management, and landscape stewardship established patterns that later influenced and enabled the location and development of Mesa's early LDS settlements and continue to shape the city's landscapes, neighborhoods, and sense of place today.

Early Settlement of Mesa (1877-1883)

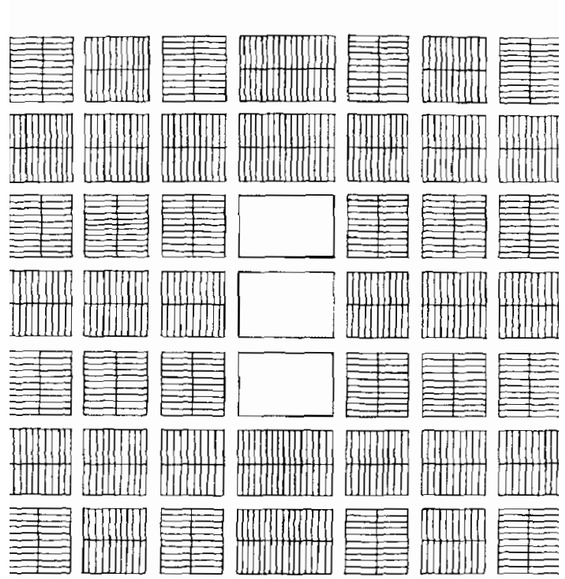
Spanish missionaries first reached Arizona in the late 1600s, and over time the region became part of New Spain, then Mexico following independence in 1821. After the Mexican-American War and the Gadsden Purchase, present-day Arizona became part of the United States and was organized as the Territory of Arizona in 1863 before achieving statehood in 1912.

Euroamerican settlement in the Mesa area began soon after the creation of the Arizona Territory. In 1877, settlers directed by LDS Church leader Brigham Young established the community of Lehi along the Salt River, drawing upon existing Ancestral O'Odham irrigation systems, while O'Odham, Piipaash, and other Native American community members assisted in constructing the canals that supported the new settlement.

A second group, known as the Mesa Company, established Mesa in 1878 south of Lehi. Mesa's original townsite followed the "City of Zion" plan developed by LDS founder Joseph Smith, featuring a one-square-mile grid with wide streets, park strips, and surrounding agricultural lots. As additional settlers arrived from Utah, Mesa grew steadily and officially incorporated in 1883.



Early Lehi settlers c. 1890 (Mesa Historical Museum)



City of Zion Plan, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Period I. History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet by Himself. Volume I (Salt Lake City: Desert Book Co., 2ed. rev., 1961)

Desert Farm Town (1883-1906)

During the 1880s and early 1900s, Mesa developed into an agricultural center in the eastern Salt River Valley. Growth was supported by expanding irrigation systems, nearby mining activity in the Superstition Mountains, and the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1895, which improved access to building materials and regional markets. Downtown Mesa expanded with new banks, hotels, stores, and homes, while Mesa's population reached 722 by 1900.

This period brought greater religious and cultural diversity as non-LDS settlers established Baptist and Methodist congregations. Severe droughts between 1898 and 1905 threatened agriculture and caused population decline, prompting valley residents to petition for a permanent water solution. Passage of the National Reclamation Act in 1902 authorized construction of Roosevelt Dam, which began in 1906.

Several buildings from this era survive today, including the Sirrine House (1896), the Pomeroy Building (1891), and the Alhambra Hotel (1893).

Growth and Expansion (1906-1945)

With the completion of the Roosevelt Dam in 1911 and increased demand for agricultural products during World War I, Mesa underwent an economic boom. By 1920, the population grew to over 3,000 residents, and new subdivisions expanded beyond the original townsite. These subdivisions featured narrower streets, concrete curbs and sidewalks, and uniform residential lots. Popular housing styles included Craftsman bungalows and Tudor, Spanish, and Pueblo Revival cottages.

Mesa's population also became increasingly diverse, with growing African American, Asian, and Latino communities. Local segregation policies and customs limited housing opportunities and contributed to culturally distinct neighborhoods, including the Washington-Escobedo Heritage Neighborhood just north of the original townsite boundary.

During the Great Depression, federal legislation and programs such as the National Housing Act of 1934, and the Works Progress and Public Works Administrations provided local employment while funding public buildings and infrastructure. These efforts resulted in projects such as the Post Building (Federal Building). By the start of World War II, Mesa's population reached 7,224 with new single-family Minimal Traditional and Early Ranch-style homes, and establishment of Falcon Field and Williams Air Force Base.

Suburban Mesa (1945-1970s)

Following World War II, Mesa experienced rapid suburban growth fueled by returning servicemen and increasing demand for housing. New subdivisions continued to spread outward from the city center and reflected postwar suburban planning trends, including larger lots, curving streets, and automobile-oriented design. Ranch-style homes became the dominant housing type, featuring open floor plans, attached carports, and garages designed for modern suburban living. Mesa experienced dramatic growth between 1950 and 1980, expanding from a population of 16,790 to more than 152,000 residents. Annexation of surrounding subdivisions transformed Mesa from a small agricultural town into a large suburban city with an increasingly expansive urban form.



Downtown Mesa, 1943 (Mesa Historical Museum)



1309 W 1st Pl. (Harvey Homesites, an early Mesa post-war subdivision)

Mesa's Architectural Context

The following section highlights the common residential architectural styles and building types found in Mesa's historic districts and places. An **architectural style** describes specific materials, roof shapes, exterior ornamentation, and architectural features associated with the style during its period of popularity. For example, Craftsman-style homes, in fashion during the first three decades of the 20th century, feature low-pitched roof shapes, deep overhanging eaves and front porches, all characteristic elements of the style.

In contrast to style, a **building type** is a building's overall shape, determined mainly by its ground floor plan, wall elevations, massing, and configuration of interior spaces.

Architectural styles typically have associated building types, with some simple and symmetrical in shape and others more complex and asymmetrical. In some instances, a historic building may feature only some aspects of an architectural style, adapted to a building type in ways that provide a more or less modest, vernacular architectural expression.

Many of Mesa's historic districts exhibit multiple architectural styles and building types that illustrate the evolution of Mesa's growth. While most buildings in the districts are single-family residences, some districts also include commercial or institutional properties. Some districts feature a cohesive building type, while others feature multiple distinct building types. It is important to assess the appropriateness of proposed modifications for both the architectural style and building type as well as for the characteristics of the district.

The information that follows is intended to give general guidance on stylistic features; however, it is recommended to consult with the Mesa Historic Preservation Office to determine character-defining features on a case-by-case basis.



110 N Pasadena • Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District





National Folk (1850-1930)

National Folk refers to a modest **architectural style** found in communities across the US, especially those located along railroad lines. These housing styles, mostly built with inexpensive, mass-produced materials, feature little to no ornamentation and relatively simple forms and shapes with gable fronts.

Typical Features

- One or two stories in height
- Box-like massing with horizontal emphasis, one or two rooms deep
- Rectangular, square, or L-Plan in form
- Wood frame with stucco or wood siding finish
- Hip or gable roof, or gable-on-hip (Dutch gable) roof forms
- Flat window and door openings
- Wood double-hung windows
- Large front verandas supported by wood posts





Cottage (1880-1940)

Cottages are typically asymmetrical, one- to one-and-a-half-story **building types** with low-pitched gable roofs, prominent chimneys, and small covered porches. Popularized through architectural pattern books during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, cottages became one of the nation's most common residential forms. Their modest size, efficient floor plans, and adaptable designs made them an affordable and practical housing type for working-class families.

Typical Features

- One or one-and-one-half stories in height
- Small- to medium-sized, emphasizing a cozy and intimate atmosphere
- Frame or masonry construction
- Often feature a combination of natural materials
- Low-pitched gabled roof
- Small covered entryway or porch
- Asymmetrical building form





Queen Anne (1880-1910)

Popular during the Victorian era, the Queen Anne **architectural style** was among the most common styles in the country and is characterized by irregular shapes and complex arrangement of massing and features. The exterior of the house is often elaborate, with varied surface materials and decorative detailing, while a complex color scheme further enhances the variety of materials used.

Typical Features

- One or one-and-one-half stories in height
- Use of decorative features to avoid the appearance of smooth exterior surfaces
- Full-width/wrap-around porches with spindle work
- Steeply pitched roof of irregular shape
- Stained glass widows
- Square or rounded towers
- Decorative shingling patterns on wall surfaces





Colonial Revival (1880-1955)

Colonial Revival homes stem from residential architecture of New England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Colonial Revival homes in Mesa are distinguished by a general symmetry in the arrangement of their parts and restraint in ornamentation. Although popular throughout the country starting in the 1880s, the Colonial Revival **architectural style** began appearing in Mesa after 1915.

Typical Features

- One-story in height
- Rectangular or L-Shaped with the long side facing the street
- Symmetrical front façade with center door entry
- Low-to medium-pitched gabled or hipped roof with hipped dormers
- Front portico with porch columns and pediment
- Entryway fan or sidelights
- Double-hung windows with multiple panes
- Paired windows are common





Mission Revival (1890-1940)

The Mission Revival **architectural style**, drawn from the inspiration of Catholic missions, was popular in the early 20th century and spread eastward from California under the influence of well-known architects and national builder magazines. Mission Revival houses in Mesa typically feature stucco wall surfaces and their curved decorative parapets are the main identifying feature.

Typical Features

- Square or rectangular floor plan
- Curved, decorative roof parapet
- One-story full or partial width porches, some with arched openings
- Symmetrical or asymmetrical façade
- Double-hung windows
- Smooth stucco wall surface





Craftsman (1905-1930)

Originating in California and made popular through architectural pattern books during the early decades of the 20th century, Craftsman houses emphasized hand craftsmanship, natural materials, and simplicity in design and ornamentation. Popular for smaller houses, this **architectural style** adapted readily to the bungalow building type.

Typical Features

- One to one-and-one-half stories
- Rectangular, square, or L-Shaped in form
- Frame, brick, or stucco construction, often in combination
- Deep overhanging eaves
- Roof rafter tails or knee brackets
- Gabled roof forms
- Square or tapered porch columns or posts
- Double-hung windows with divided light upper sash





Bungalow (1905-1935)

A Bungalow is a small, typically one-story **building type** with a covered front porch. In the early 1900s, the Bungalow garnered an enormous following among the middle class because of its simple and practical style. Popular in Mesa from 1910-1940, bungalows typically feature gently sloping gable or hip roofs with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters or roof beams. Porches typically have tapered wood columns on brick piers.

Typical Features

- One to one-and-one-half stories
- Box-like massing
- Gable end typically faces street
- Wood, brick, or stucco wall surfaces
- Medium-pitched hipped or gabled roof, often with dormers
- Deep overhanging eaves
- Prominent, covered front porch





Pueblo Revival (1910-present)

The Pueblo Revival **architectural style**, derived from late 18th and early 19th century Southwest Pueblo of the Rio Grande Valley, New Mexico, and northern Arizona, blends aspects of both Native American pueblos and structures built by Spanish colonists in Mexico. Pueblo Revival style homes were built in Mesa during the late 1920s through the modern-era.

Typical Features

- One story with rectangular asymmetrical façade and stepped massing
- Flat roofs sometimes concealed behind irregular plastered parapets
- Front entry porches with tile roofs
- Adobe or stucco construction or wall finish
- Squared window openings with casement or double-hung windows
- Little to no wall surface ornamentation
- Decorative elements like exposed log beams, hewn timber beams, post and lintels, and water scuppers



Tudor/English Cottage Revival (1915-1940)

Noted for its steeply pitched gables and roof forms, the Tudor Revival **architectural style** became popular in the United States during the 1920s and is loosely based on late medieval English prototypes. A variant of the Tudor Revival is the English Cottage, which typically features an asymmetrical floor plan with plain wall surfaces and cross-gabled roof forms.

Typical Features

- One story and rectangular or L-Shape in form
- Steeply pitched and cross-gabled roof forms with multiple front-facing gables or one dominant gable
- False half-timbering and arched fenestration openings
- Multi-pane windows, sometimes tall and narrow and arranged in groups
- Large chimney stacks
- Small portals or vestibules rather than large front porches





Spanish Revival (1915-1940)

Popular during the 1920s and 1930s and common in California and the American Southwest, the Spanish Revival **architectural style** stems from an interest in the region's heritage, including its historic links to Spain, Mexico, and Native American cultures. Spanish Revival is characterized by stucco walls; tile roofs; arched window, door, and porch openings; and asymmetrical façades. Spanish Revival homes incorporate a number of architectural elements and ornamentation from different Spanish architectural traditions emanating from Moorish influence.

Typical Features

- One to two stories in height
- Rectangular and asymmetrical floor plans
- Stucco wall surfaces
- Low-pitched, Spanish tile roofs
- Round towers in some examples
- Arched door or window openings





Streamline Moderne (1920-1950)

Popular during the 1920s and 1930s, the Streamline Moderne **architectural style** features smooth and rounded wall surfaces, mostly in stucco but also in brick. While less common in residential dwellings, Streamline Moderne was a popular style used for transportation facilities such as bus and airport terminals, car garages and dealerships. Streamline Moderne was a departure from the more decorative Art Deco style of the same time period.

Typical Features

- One to two stories in height
- Horizontal orientation
- Stucco or brick wall surfaces
- Flat roofs
- Smooth asymmetrical façades often curved walls
- Steel casement and glass block windows
- Round porthole windows





International Style (1925-present)

The International Style evolved in Europe as a rejection of ornament and previous architectural styles. Principally used for office buildings, residential dwellings designed in this **architectural style** feature smooth concrete or stucco wall surfaces devoid of ornamentation, narrow bands of steel casement windows, flat roofs with parapets, and, in some cases, projecting canopies, especially over entries.

Typical Features

- One to two stories in height
- Rectangular or asymmetrical in form
- Smooth wall surfaces of concrete or stucco
- Narrow window bands, or floor-ceiling windows in some cases
- Flat roofs and canopies, sometimes overhanging or projecting





Minimal Traditional (1935-1950)

The Minimal Traditional **architectural style** emerged in the U.S. during the late 1930s and became popular in the 1940s and 1950s. The house type was a response to economic and social conditions of the time, particularly the shortage of materials and labor during World War II and the subsequent housing demand for returning veterans and their families. The Minimal Traditional style is characterized by its simplicity, efficiency and compactness.

Typical Features

- One story in height
- Small size
- Rectangular form
- Stucco, wood, or brick wall surfaces
- Minimal ornamentation
- Basic materials
- Functional floor plans





Early Ranch (1935 -1955)

The Early Ranch or Transitional Ranch **building type** evolved from the earlier Bungalow and Cottage building types common during the Great Depression. Early Ranch homes provided an affordable housing option for many people both before and after World War II and set the stage for the subsequent evolution and popularity of the Ranch-type home in the United States.

Typical Features

- One story, rectangular or L-shaped form
- Low-pitched gable or hip roofs
- Small wood framed porches occurring over the entry or the juncture of the intersecting roofs
- Square or rectangular windows/doors
- Metal-framed windows with small window panes
- Corner or bay windows





Ranch (1935-1975)

The Ranch home is a single-story **building type** with a low-pitched roof and rectilinear or elongated form. Ranch homes open layouts, functional design, and affordability made them an attractive choice for middle-class families looking to settle in expanding suburbs. Over time, the Ranch became a symbol of American suburban living, embodying a blend of practicality, simplicity and connection to the landscape.

Typical Features

- Single-story with a horizontal orientation
- Rectangular or L-shaped
- Wood frame, brick, or stucco wall surfaces
- Long, low roof lines
- Low-pitched roof, sometimes cross-gabled
- Off-center front door entry, often recessed
- Steel casement windows and picture windows, often with multiple lights
- Attached garage or carport
- Minimal embellishments and symmetrical designs





Prairie Ranch (1935-1975)

Prairie Ranches are meant to blend in with flat, open landscapes, spreading out horizontally across large lots, rather than building upwards. Prairie-Ranch houses, a subtype of the Ranch **building type**, often have flat or minimally pitched roof lines with overhanging eaves, and low profile exteriors composed of flat lines and planes. They are composed of materials with roots in the natural world, including wood, stucco, stone, and rustic brick.

Typical Features

- Single-story with a horizontal orientation
- Rectangular or L-shaped with broadside to the street
- Low-pitched hip or modified hip roof with broad overhanging eaves.
- Decorative elements to create door surrounds include sidelights, planters, and low walls
- Craft-style front doors and corner windows
- Often lacks a defined front porch





Mid-Century Modern (1945-1975)

Mid-century Modern architecture is characterized by clean, minimalist design, the use of diverse materials and a lack of ornamentation in favor of geometric shapes and angles. This **architectural style**, prevalent in Mesa, was used in both commercial and residential construction and gained prominence in the post World War II era when demand for new construction was high and architects began exploring the use of new materials like steel, concrete and insulated glass. The style heavily influenced Mesa's development.

Typical Features

- Angular or curved roof forms
- Use of breeze block
- Decorative brick grills
- Masonry with stacked bonds
- Off-center entries
- Frame, brick, or stucco wall surfaces





Rambling Ranch (1945-1975)

Rambling Ranch homes, also known as sprawling Ranch homes, represent a unique subtype of the Ranch **building type** that gained popularity in the mid-20th century. The term "rambling" aptly describes the sprawling nature of these homes. They typically feature a single-story design with a long, horizontal footprint that stretches across the property. Rambling Ranch homes, mostly found in Fraser Fields in Mesa, are often nestled on large lots, allowing for expansive outdoor spaces and landscaping opportunities.

Typical Features

- Long, horizontal building footprint
- Expansive windows, picture windows common
- Low-pitched roof line
- Multiple outdoor spaces
- Combination of materials





Classic Ranch/California Ranch (1945-1965)

The California Ranch, subtype of the Ranch **building type,** is characterized by an L- or U-shaped structure built low to the ground. This sprawling, single-story style is designed to blend with nature. A patio and front lawn are key features of the California Ranch style.

Typical Features

- One story, elongated rectangular or L-shaped
- Variety of low-pitched roof types including gable, hip, or intersecting gables and/or hips
- Minimal porch, usually in the form of an extended eave, with or without posts over the junction of the two wings
- Attached carport or garage
- Steel casement windows with no trim





Polynesian Ranch (1955-1975)

Polynesian Ranch homes, a subtype of the Ranch **building type**, are rare mid-century variations blending the low, horizontal layout of classic ranch houses with tropical-inspired design elements adapted for the desert climate. Influences came from postwar fascination with Hawaii, Polynesian pop culture, and resort architecture.

Typical Features

- Low-pitched or dramatically extended rooflines with deep overhangs and exposed beam gable accents
- Dominant hip roof with dramatic front-facing gables or outward angled side-facing gables
- Exposed beams and tongue-and-groove ceilings
- Lava rock, breeze block, or rough stone accents
- Courtyard-style entries and indoor-outdoor living spaces
- Large picture windows facing patios or pools
- Tropical landscaping mixed with desert plants
- Decorative tiki or island-inspired details





166 W Main St. • Downtown Mesa

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A - CITY OF MESA HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

APPENDIX B - CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS REVIEW STANDARDS

APPENDIX C - CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

APPENDIX D - HISTORIC DISTRICTS & HISTORIC LANDMARKS

APPENDIX E - CULTURAL HERITAGE & HERITAGE NEIGHBORHOODS

Appendix A - City of Mesa Historic Preservation Program

Mesa's local historic preservation efforts trace back to the 1960s when a group of local citizens formed the Mesa Historical and Archaeological Society, an organization that helped establish the Mesa Museum of Archaeology and History in 1978, now the Arizona Museum of Natural History. However, it was not until 1993, following advocacy from concerned citizens, that the Mesa City Council adopted the community's first historic preservation ordinance, establishing procedures for designating landmarks and historic districts, as well as reviewing permit applications for exterior design changes and building demolitions.

In 1995, Mesa became a Certified Local Government (CLG) through the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, allowing the City of Mesa to participate in federally funded grant and technical assistance opportunities. Today, the City of Mesa Historic Preservation Office administers the local historic preservation program in conjunction with the Historic Preservation Board (HPB). The HPB, comprised of seven appointed members, makes recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Board, the Design Review Board, and the Mesa City Council on various preservation-related matters.



City of Mesa Historic Preservation Board & City Staff (2024)

Mesa's Historic Preservation Office has grown to include staff support for local and National Register designation of historic properties and Heritage Neighborhood recognition, assistance with regulatory compliance, preservation of Mesa's cultural heritage, and programs for the enhancement of public knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the City's rich history.

Historic Districts & Historic Landmarks

Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks within the City of Mesa can be listed on the National Register, locally designated, or both. Both National and local designation can be used as effective preservation planning tools, either independently or together, to help preserve a community's historic resources and character.

The City of Mesa Historic Preservation Office maintains the Mesa Historic Property Register, which includes all historic property designations in the City and is made available to the public.

Local historic preservation is the process of protecting significant areas or buildings in a community through local laws and organizations. Most legal power to protect historic places rests with local government. In Mesa, locally designated historic resources meet criteria for significance outlined within the Mesa Zoning Ordinance and may be subject to review by the Historic Preservation Office and/or Historic Preservation Board.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic sites worthy of preservation, authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Managed by the National Park Service, it is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archaeological resources.

The National Register includes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Nominations are submitted by public agencies, private individuals, organizations, and local governments. A professional review board in each state evaluates nominations and makes recommendations.

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places is honorific and generally does not restrict the use or disposition of a historic resource, unless the property is federally owned or involved in a federal undertaking. National Register listing may make available state and federal financial and technical assistance programs to property owners.

Heritage Neighborhood Recognition

The City of Mesa Heritage Neighborhood Recognition Program was created to help recognize and give status to neighborhoods in Mesa that have a unique history that do not have historic district designation. This honorary recognition does not impose additional regulations, but Heritage Neighborhood areas may be within other types of zoning districts with specific standards and review criteria. The Washington-Escobedo Neighborhood and the Lehi Neighborhood are Mesa's only Heritage Neighborhoods. More information on this program and neighborhood history can be found in Appendix E and on the Mesa Historic Preservation Office website.

Historic & Cultural Resource Surveys

Many times, significant buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts are identified through historic property or cultural resource survey. These surveys identify potential historic and cultural resources, explore historic context, and may evaluate eligibility for listing in the Mesa Historic Property Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places. To date, surveys administered by the City's Historic Preservation Office have inventoried more than 3,000 properties.



View south of Temple Historic District



Neon Garden at the Post, 26 N Macdonald

Regulatory Compliance

Mesa's Historic Preservation Office supports the City of Mesa in complying with local, state and federal laws governing historic properties and cultural resources. Some examples of this work include issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) for local historic districts or landmarks, reviews required under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and archaeological assessments for projects on land owned or controlled by the City, where appropriate.

Preserving Mesa's Cultural Heritage

Mesa's cultural heritage includes not only standing buildings and structures, but also archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural places, and other resources that may exist above or below ground. Mesa is home to hundreds of archaeological and cultural sites that represent thousands of years of history and many stories.

Projects should be sensitive to the potential presence of these resources, are encouraged to coordinate with qualified professionals, descendant communities, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, the State Historic Preservation Office, and Mesa's City Archaeologist, and must comply with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations governing cultural resources. To learn more about the protection of cultural resources, please contact the Mesa Historic Preservation Office.

Sharing Community History

The Historic Preservation program promotes awareness of Mesa's architectural and cultural heritage, collaborates with residents and business owners to preserve this history, and fosters civic pride, ensuring that future generations can appreciate and understand Mesa's unique cultural legacy.

Mesa's Historic Preservation program includes public outreach in the form of monthly Historic Preservation Board meetings, community meetings, presentations, walking tours, and more. Each May, during Historic Preservation Month, school-aged Mesa residents are asked to showcase their visual and language arts skills for the HP Student Essay & Visual Arts Contest. To see past years' submissions click here.

Supporting Preservation for the Future

Historic preservation plays a crucial role in shaping vibrant, sustainable communities. By protecting and revitalizing historic buildings, neighborhoods, and cultural landmarks, cities maintain a tangible connection to their identity and heritage, while fostering community pride and a sense of place.

Preservation encourages adaptive reuse, transforming older structures into functional spaces like housing, offices, or cultural centers. Saving these historic resources reduces environmental impact when compared to new construction.

Historic preservation can also support local economies by encouraging tourism, attracting investment, increasing property values, and strengthening neighborhood character. Revitalized historic districts often become hubs of small businesses, arts, and culture, attracting both locals and visitors alike.

Additional Resources & Learning

Mesa Historic Preservation Office
www.mesaaz.gov/hp

Arizona State Historic Preservation Office
www.azstateparks.com/SHPO

National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places
www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister

National Park Service, Technical Briefs
www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs

Mesa Room at the Main Library
www.mesalibrary.org/research/mesa-room

Mesa Historical Museum
www.mesahistoricalmuseum.com

Mesa Preservation Foundation
www.mesapreservation.org

Arizona Preservation Foundation
www.azpreservation.org

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
www.achp.gov



Student award winners, their teacher, and winning art entry at the 2026 Historic Preservation Month Celebration.



Historic Homes of Mesa Walking Tour (2024)



Historic Preservation Officer, Matthew Kriegl, presenting at PreserveAZ Conference in Phoenix (2025)

Appendix B - COA Review Standards

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Mesa Zoning Ordinance requires COA decisions to be based on compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, in conjunction with the guidance provided in these Design Guidelines.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.



7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.



Standards for Demolition

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 impractical; or

B. The Historic Preservation Board determines that both of the following are found:
   i. The building(s), structure(s), object(s), archaeological resource(s), or site(s) have minimal historic significance because of its location, conditions, modifications, or other factors; and
   ii. Demolition of the building(s), structure(s), object(s), archaeological resource(s), or site(s) would not have an adverse impact on the preservation of historic properties in the vicinity.

Appendix C - Character Defining Features

Definitions of Character Defining Features of a Building

Foundations

Foundations support and stabilize a house and usually include a footing below ground and a stem wall above it. The stem wall rises from the ground and supports the exterior walls, usually stopping at the first floor. Foundations may be made of concrete, brick, or stone, and some homes have little or no footing at all. In Mesa, some even include basements, which is uncommon in much of Arizona.

Exterior Walls

The exterior walls of a historic residence often combine traditional siding materials with layered construction techniques that may include shiplap beneath or as part of the structural system, providing a tight, interlocking wooden barrier against weather. This type of construction reflects earlier craftsmanship, where durability and material efficiency were essential to protecting the home from sun, wind, and seasonal moisture. It is important to maintain these exterior walls, including any original shiplap.

Articulation

Articulation refers to the way a building's massing, form, and structural components are expressed to create depth, rhythm, and visual organization. This includes the composition of volumes, setbacks, projections, entrances, window groupings, roof forms, and the relationship between horizontal and vertical elements.

Preserving historic articulation is important because it maintains the building's original scale and proportions. Retaining historic articulation helps preserve the integrity of the resource and the streetscape character.

Additions to historic buildings should be compatible through complementary massing, scale, and proportion. New additions should remain visually subordinate to the historic structure while using transitions, setbacks, and clearly defined forms to distinguish new construction from the original building without disrupting its historic character.

Roof/Roofing

Roofs are are visually prominent elements of houses. In Mesa, roof types vary greatly depending on the historic styles. One may find materials such as wood shingles, clay tiles, metal, asphalt shingles, and rolled-on built-up roofing. Each roof type and material requires individual care and maintenance. The watertightness of a roof also is essential in maintaining the house's physical condition.

Masonry

Many historic homes in Mesa were comprised of masonry construction, usually brick, stone, adobe, concrete, concrete block, terra cotta, hollow clay tiles, or concrete masonry units (CMUs), which are standardized pre-cast concrete blocks commonly used in structural and decorative construction. Breeze blocks were also commonly incorporated into Ranch and Modern-era buildings to provide shade, ventilation, privacy, and visual texture. In general, masonry walls of historic houses were not originally painted except in some examples of Period Revival and Ranch styles. It is not appropriate to paint previously unpainted masonry.

Stucco

The use of stucco on masonry and wood frame walls is very common in Mesa, especially on bungalows and Period Revival houses. The terms "stucco" and "plaster" are used interchangeably in common usage. However, "stucco" actually refers to a trowel-applied, non-structural exterior plaster made primarily of cement.

Adobe

Historic adobe homes in Mesa reflect the region's early desert architecture, using thick sun-dried mud brick walls to keep interiors cool during intense Arizona heat. Many of these homes, especially those connected to early farming communities and pioneer settlements, showcase Southwestern craftsmanship and preserve an important part of Mesa's cultural heritage.

Wood

Historic wood siding reflects early building practices in which locally available timber was used to protect structures from sun and seasonal weather while providing an economical and easily repairable exterior material. In many older neighborhoods, wood siding was preferred over stucco or masonry because individual boards could be replaced without extensive reconstruction.

Common siding types include clapboard (lap), shingle, and board-and-batten siding, where thin vertical wood strips, or battens, cover the seams between wider boards to create strong vertical articulation, shadow lines, and texture on the building exterior. The "reveal," or visible space between adjacent rows of siding, is an important aspect of historic wood cladding.

Chimneys

A chimney is an architectural structure built to vent smoke and heat from fireplaces, stoves, or furnaces. Historic chimneys often feature traditional materials such as brick, stone, or adobe and help reflect the construction styles and daily life of a community's past.

Windows and Doors

Historic buildings contain a variety of window and door types and materials that reflect the city's architectural development from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. Common window types include double-hung wood sash windows, casement windows, steel-framed industrial and Modern-style windows, fixed picture windows, and grouped horizontal windows.

Historic doors similarly vary by architectural style and period, including paneled wood doors, glazed entry doors, recessed entries, and decorative screen or storm doors common in residential neighborhoods.

Original materials were typically wood or steel, selected for their durability and compatibility with regional architectural traditions. The size, proportions, glazing patterns, and placement of windows and doors contribute significantly to the historic character and articulation of buildings within Mesa's historic districts and historic landmarks. Retention and repair of original materials and configurations are encouraged, while replacements should match the historic openings, profiles, and overall visual character of the structure.

Porches

Porches help to define the character of a house's historic style. As important elements of architectural design they should be retained and maintained.

Awnings and Shades

Shade is a precious commodity in Mesa, Arizona. In the early years of settlement, Vernacular houses were built with deep porches and canvas awnings to help keep them cool. With local trends in housing turning more toward nationally popular architectural styles and with the advent of evaporative cooling in the 1930s, the porches and awnings began to disappear. Awnings were predominantly relegated to commercial structures.

Landscaping

Early Mesa was promoted as a green oasis in the desert, supported by canal irrigation that brought water to homes. Many residents planted lawns, trees, and flowers to recreate the look of Midwestern neighborhoods, even though desert plants would have used less water. Over time, they relied on flood irrigation and non-native plants, creating the lush, grassy yards still seen in older neighborhoods today. This landscaping remains a key part of Mesa's historic neighborhood character.

Porte-Cocheres and Carports

Many historic homes include features like porte-cocheres or carports as key parts of their design. Craftsman houses often feature porte-cocheres along with prominent rooflines and porches that define their look. Later Ranch-style homes may include attached carports instead. These features are usually integrated into the building and designed to match the home's overall style and details.

Painting

Virtually every historic house has features which were painted, stained, or varnished to protect them from deterioration from weathering. Occasional exterior stucco may have been colored with pigment additives rather than having been painted. The stucco of some bungalows may have even been purposefully left a natural cement color as an aesthetic expression and as a low maintenance surface needing no paint. Brick and stone are traditionally left unpainted to allow proper function of these materials.

Appendix D - Historic Districts & Historic Landmarks

Historic Districts

A historic district is a geographically defined area of buildings, structures, or sites that are recognized for their collective historical, cultural, or architectural significance. Historic districts are often characterized by their distinctive architectural styles or building types and shared historical context, reflecting the heritage and development of a community.

Mesa is home to **eight designated historic districts**. All eight of these historic districts are listed on the Mesa Historic Properties Register (MHPR) and seven are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Historic districts help preserve the character of neighborhoods, promote awareness of local history, encourage appropriate improvements, enhance property values, and foster a sense of community pride.

Listing on the NRHP is honorary and may provide access to certain preservation incentives. Properties designated on the MHPR are within Historic Preservation Overlays which ensure exterior alterations, additions, and new construction are compatible with the historic district through the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) review process.



DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICTS IN MESA

Local Designation: Mesa Historic Property Register (MHPR)
National Designation: National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

1. Glenwood-Wilbur Street Historic District (MHPR and NRHP)
2. West 2nd Street Historic District (MHPR and NRHP)
3. Evergreen Historic District (MHPR and NRHP)
4. Temple Historic District (MHPR and NRHP)
5. Robson Historic District (MHPR and NRHP)
6. West Side-Clark Addition Historic District (MHPR and NRHP)
7. Flying Acres Local Historic District (MHPR)
8. Fraser Fields Historic District (MHPR and NRHP)

Map 1: Mesa Local Historic Districts and National Register Historic Districts



Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District

The Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District represents the early 20th century development of the original Mesa Townsite from large lots to subdivisions with smaller single-family residences. Platted between 1919 and 1922, the district is an example of Mesa's transition from a rural, agricultural community to a more urban center. This area encompasses four north-south streets, including N Pasadena, N Hibbert, N Wilbur Street, and Pomeroy Street, and is bounded on the north and south by Second Street and First Street.

Architectural Styles and Building Types:

Over time, the area developed into a cohesive neighborhood of middle- and working-class families and showcases a diverse mix of architectural styles common during the first half of the 20th century in Arizona. Reflecting over forty years of continuous development, prominent architectural styles and building types found mixed throughout the neighborhood include:

- modest National Folk
- Bungalows (pre-WWI & Craftsman style)
- Period Revival (including Tudor and Pueblo)
- Ranch

Development Pattern and Streetscape:

The district, primarily composed of residential buildings and mature landscaping, illustrates Mesa's transition from its 19th century "City of Zion" plan to the more compact suburban subdivision patterns of the early 20th century. Wide streets and square blocks associated with the original settlement, like along Hibbert and Pomeroy, were gradually supplemented by the narrower auto-centric streets, and smaller residential lots along Pasadena and Wilbur.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic District: Designated 1996 National Register Historic District: Listed 1999	
Period of Significance	1883-1948

Map 2: Glenwood-Wilbur Historic District



West 2nd Street Historic District

The West Second Street Historic District is the oldest and most architecturally diverse historic district in Mesa. This district is significant not only for its rich architectural variety but also for its historical association with the development of Mesa's prominent middle- and upper-class families during the early 1900s. Encompassing portions of five blocks from the original townsite, the district showcases refined architectural styles and iconic landscaping elements. The area includes four north-south streets, Robson, Macdonald, Drew, and Center, and two east-west streets, Second Street and First Street.

Architectural Styles and Building Types:

The West Second Street Historic District features a diverse and eclectic array of architectural styles and building types that reflect over four decades of development. Represented architectural styles and building types in the neighborhood include:

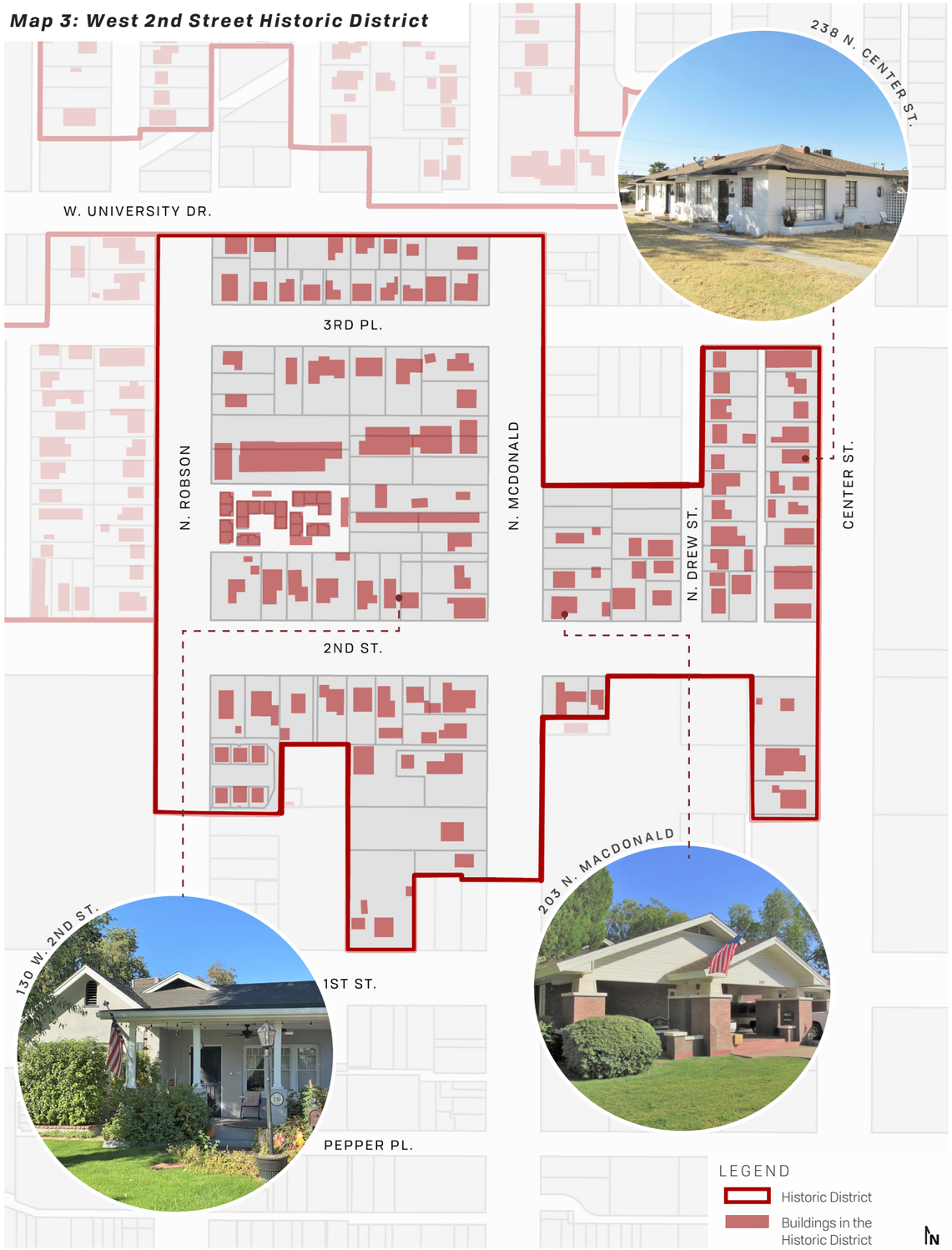
- National Folk or Vernacular style
- Bungalows
- High-style Period Revival homes (including Mission and Colonial)
- Ranch houses on the fringes

Development Pattern and Streetscape:

Unlike the formal replatting of entire blocks into residential subdivisions, the original "City of Zion" garden blocks in this district were divided into individual lots through gradual lot splits. This process allowed for a more organic, incremental development of the area. A defining feature of the district is its wide public rights-of-way, which were improved and narrowed through the introduction of tree-lined, grassy medians. These landscaped medians are significant character-defining elements that contribute to the district's unique charm.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic District: Designated 2001 National Register Historic: Listed 1999/Amended 2003	
Period of Significance	1883-1959

Map 3: West 2nd Street Historic District



Evergreen Historic District

The Evergreen Historic District comprises subdivisions that were platted beyond Mesa's original townsite. This expansion reflects a series of national economic trends in the first half of the 20th century, including expanding access to public utilities, a short-lived surge in development following WWI, and the boom of post-WWII population growth in the area. The Evergreen Historic District exemplifies one of the first neighborhoods that thrived beyond the original townsite boundary. Its varied architectural styles and subdivision layout are characteristic of rapid expansion in Mesa, and the broader region at this time.

Architectural Styles and Building Types:

Houses within the Evergreen Historic District were advertised as an exclusive and "beautiful new addition" to the town of Mesa. Reflective of changing development trends, the architectural styles and building types are varied and include:

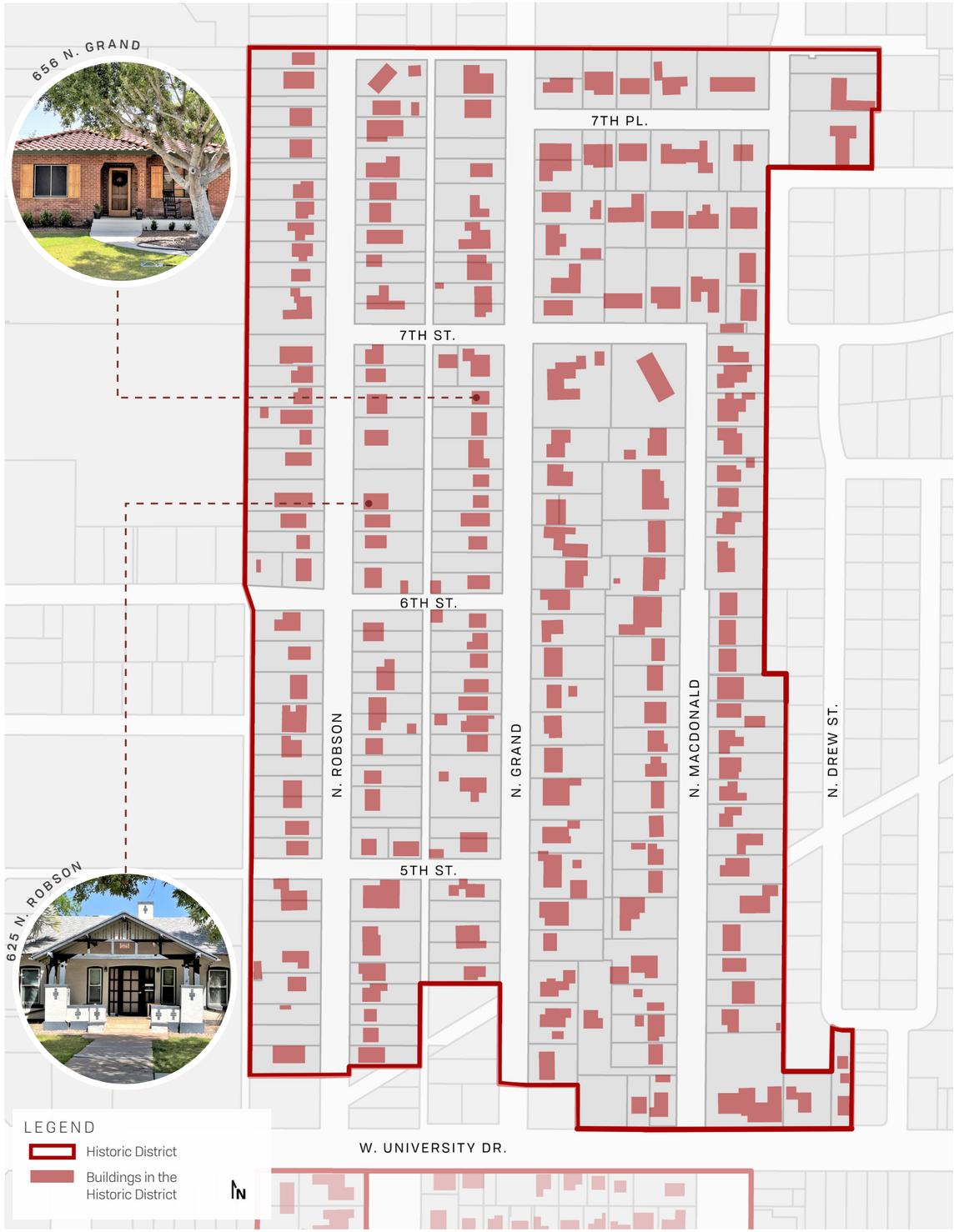
- National Folk or Vernacular style
- Bungalows
- Period Revival (including Tudor, Spanish Colonial, Pueblo, and Colonial)
- Ranch

Development Pattern and Streetscape:

When first developed, the Evergreen Historic District emphasized graded streets, water and gas connections, and surrounding agricultural land which gave the subdivision a "natural park" setting. The neighborhood aimed to create an exclusive community, enforcing deed restrictions, minimum setbacks, prohibitions on certain businesses such as saloons, blacksmiths, stables, and stores, and restricted property ownership to "only white Americans."

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic District: Designated 1999 National Register Historic District: Listed 1999/Amended 2018	
Period of Significance	1910-1948

Map 4: Evergreen Historic District



Temple Historic District

The Temple Historic District is composed of three north-south streets, including Mesa Drive, Udall Street, and Lesueur Street, and is bordered by Main Street to the north and Broadway Road to the south. The district contains two early residential subdivisions, the Arizona Temple Addition, platted in 1922, and the Stapley Addition, platted in 1924. The prominent 1927 Arizona Temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, after which the district is named, played a pivotal role in the area's expansion, sparking the sale of lots and the construction of homes.

The two early subdivisions contributed to the distinct development patterns still visible today, with First Avenue designed as a formal, tree-lined boulevard leading directly to the temple, and the other streets designed to be narrower for efficient and high-density housing options.

Architectural Styles and Building Types:

The materials and architectural details of the homes in the district differ between the Arizona Temple Addition and Stapley Addition portions of the neighborhood. Homes in the Arizona Temple Addition, particularly along First Avenue, tend to be larger and more elaborate, while the homes in the Stapley Addition are smaller and more modest, with simpler massing and detailing. These varied architectural styles and building types within the district include:

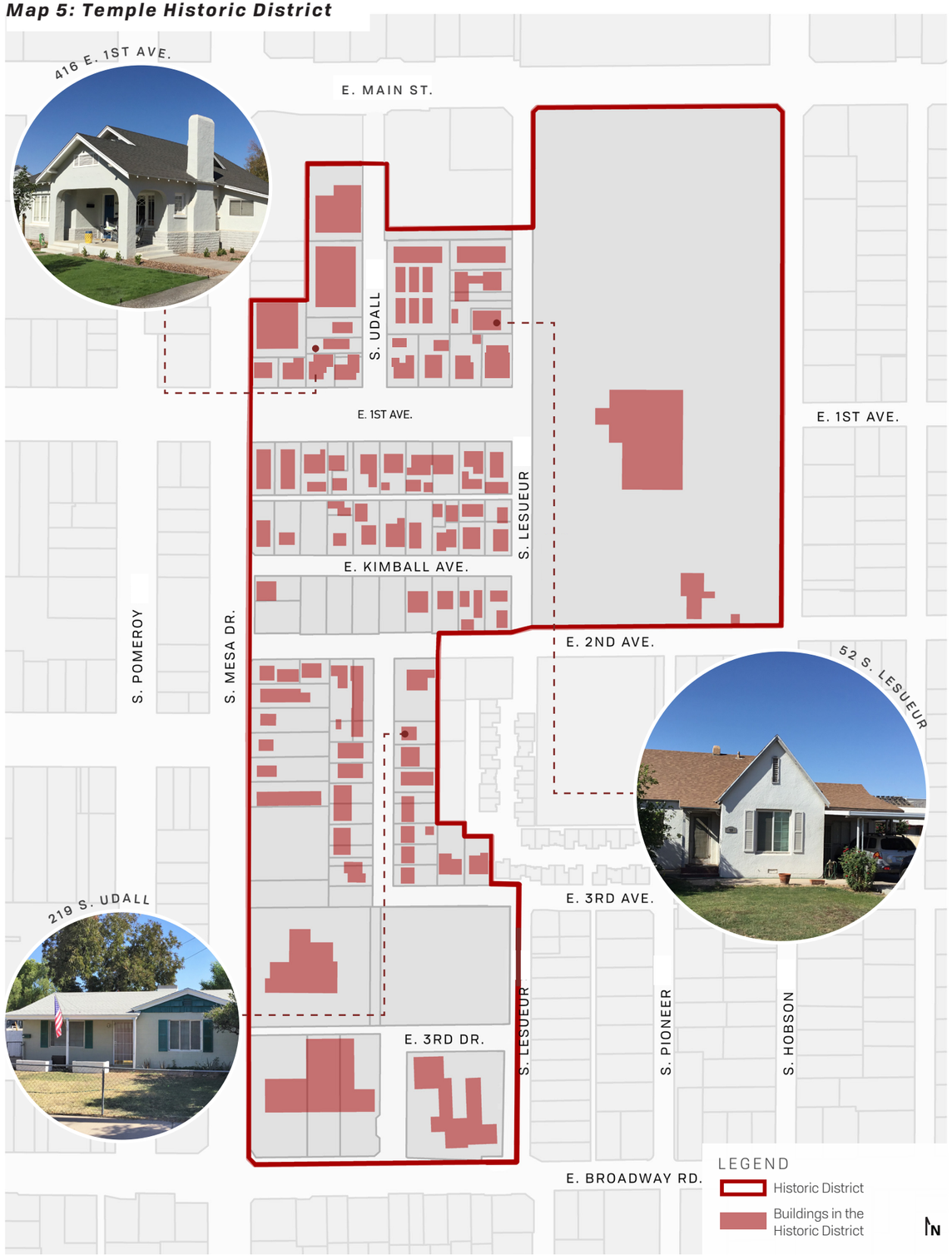
- early Bungalows
- National Folk
- Tudor Revival
- Minimal Traditional
- Transitional/Early Ranch
- Ranch

Development Pattern and Streetscape:

First Avenue's formal, tree-lined boulevard leads directly to the LDS Temple, creating a visual axis that underscores the Temple's prominence and district's historic character. Homes built along First Avenue were considered prestigious and feature dense, mature greenery. In contrast, the other streets in the district reflect a more efficient approach to land subdivision, with long, rectangular blocks that have open and sparsely vegetated landscapes.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic District: Designated 2001 National Register Historic: Listed 2000	
Period of Significance	1910-1949

Map 5: Temple Historic District



Robson Historic District

The Robson Historic District is roughly bound by University Drive on the north, Second Street on the south, Country Club Drive on the west, and Robson Street on the east. The district exemplifies the early to mid-20th century growth and transformation of the original Mesa Townsite. The district highlights the shift from large garden lots, typical of the original Mormon settlement, to smaller, more densely developed parcels to accommodate the city's growing population.

Demonstrated by its irregular lot sizes, varied layout of its residential parcels, and by the evolution of its architectural styles, the Robson Historic District stands out as one of the clearest examples of informal development through lot splits. The district is primarily composed of residential buildings, with some commercial properties on the northern, western and southern boundaries.

Architectural Styles and Building Types:

The sixty-year history of residential development and architectural styles of Mesa is reflected at a neighborhood scale in the Robson Historic District where changes in the popularity of architectural styles coincides with regional development booms. Examples of nationally popular styles of the time are found mixed throughout the district and include:

- early Bungalows
- Period Revival (including Tudor and Colonial)
- some National Folk
- Minimal Traditional
- Ranch

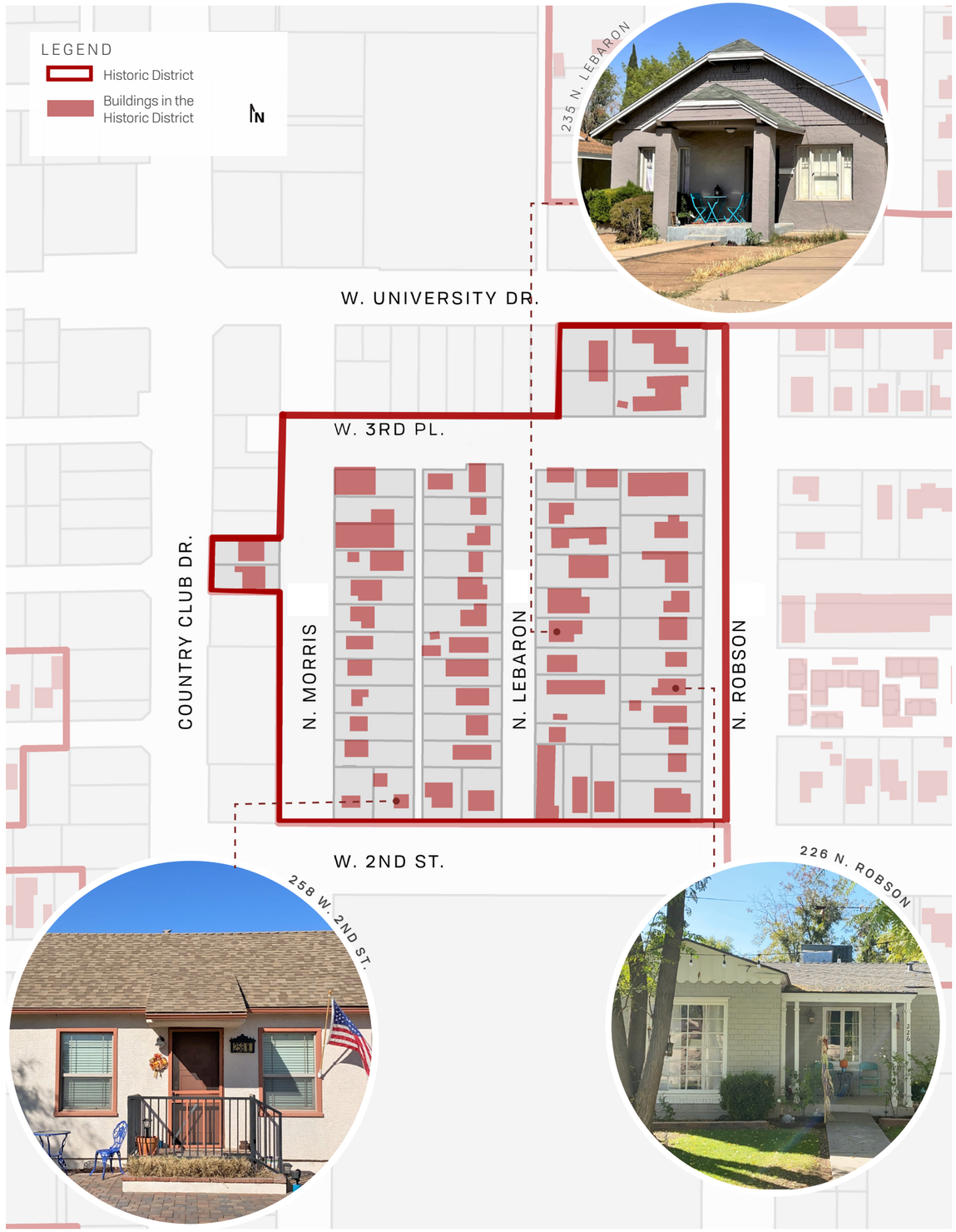
Development Pattern and Streetscape:

The Robson Historic District encompasses blocks originally platted as part of the 1883 Mesa townsite. As the community expanded, many of these original blocks were subdivided into smaller parcels and following the completion of Mesa's master plat in 1930, the remaining larger lots were also split. Over time, many of the district's earliest homes were demolished and replaced, leading to a mix of architectural styles and construction dates. This gradual, informal development process gives the district its eclectic character, blending older structures with newer ones.

The landscaping in the Robson Historic District is minimal and modest and exhibits a visual rhythm with shallow front yards and simple green lawn spaces. The district is typically less dense and lush when compared to other surrounding historic neighborhoods.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic District: Designated 2001 National Register Historic: District Listed 2003	
Period of Significance	1911-1959

Map 6: Robson Historic District



West Side-Clark Addition Historic District

The West Side-Clark Addition Historic District represents the first residential area to be developed outside the western boundary of Mesa's original townsite. Once a large agricultural property, the district is now bordered by University Drive (formerly Fourth Street) on the north, East Main Street on the south, Country Club Drive (formerly Mesa Drive) on the east, and Date Street on the west. Four single-family residential subdivisions, platted between 1930 and 1947, as well as a post-war townhouse subdivision, platted in 1973, comprise the district.

Specific development trends in these subdivisions govern the appearance of the West Side-Clark Addition Historic District. The pre-World War II subdivisions, in the north, contain the oldest houses while the two later subdivisions, platted after World War II, represent the era of rapid construction and population expansion that characterized much of west Mesa. The 1973 townhouse subdivision reflects more recent infilling of vacant land within the expanded city limits.

Architectural Styles and Building Types:

The West Side-Clark Historic District showcases suburban planning approaches and architectural styles common in the region from the 1930s through the late 1950s. The district is primarily composed of middle-income, single-family housing. Stylistic characteristics differ between its northern and southern portions, highlighting the contrasting development patterns of pre- and post-war subdivisions. The mixture of architectural styles and building types in the district include:

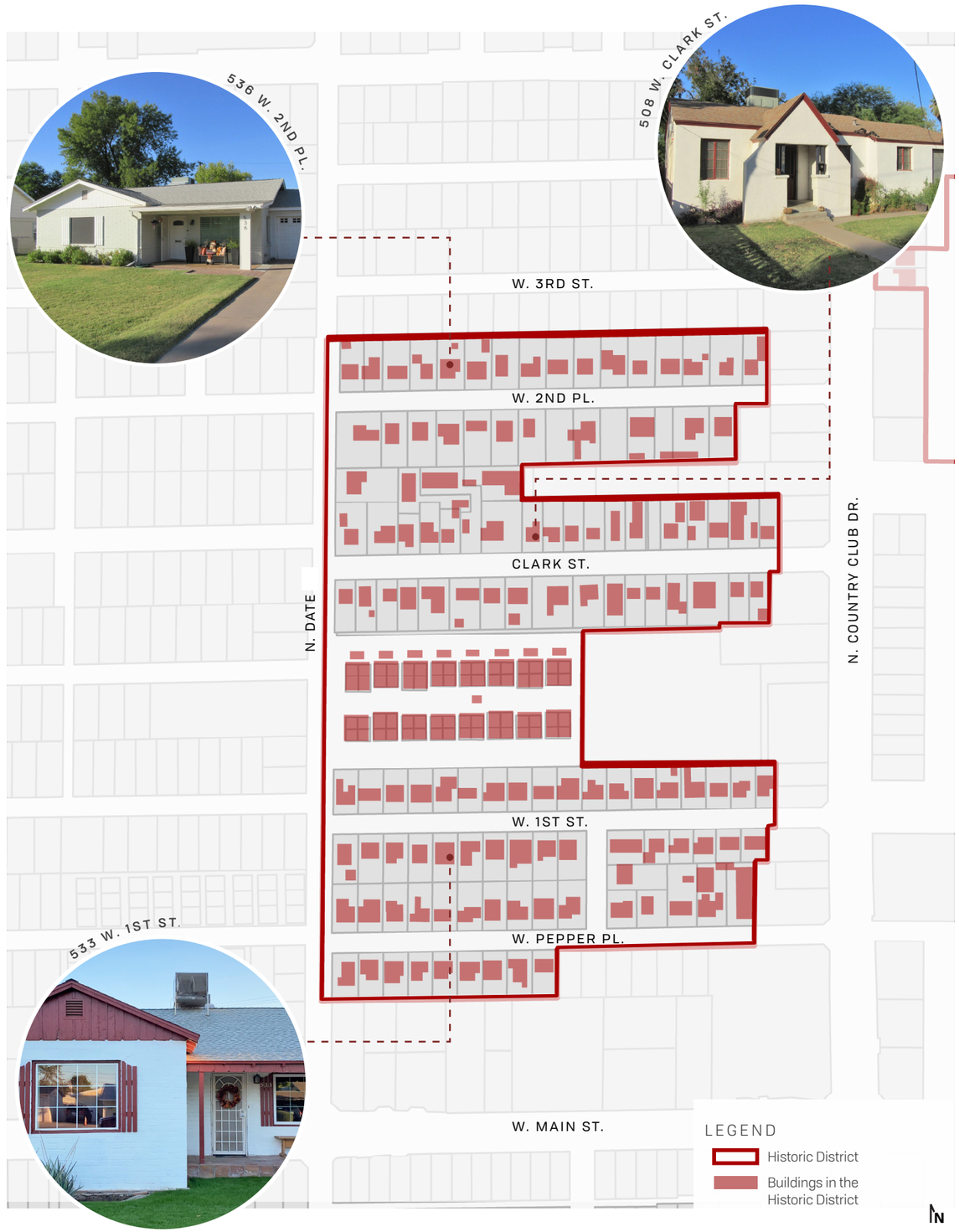
- predominantly Ranch (including Early Ranch, Classic Ranch)
- few early Bungalows
- few Minimal Traditional
- few Period Revival (Tudor and Spanish Colonial)

Development Pattern and Streetscape:

The vast majority of the district is laid out with long, narrow blocks on straight streets oriented to the points of the compass. The streetscapes are formed by regularly spaced, small, one-story houses on equal-sized lots with narrow frontage. Three of the early subdivisions have tree lawns or parkways with sidewalks buffered from the street. When subdividied, the district did not retain flood irrigation; however, many homes still retain mature evergreen or deciduous trees and palms, as well as hedges, shrubs, and lawns.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic District: Designated 2017 National Register Historic: District Listed 2010	
Period of Significance	1930-1958

Map 7: West Side-Clark Addition Historic District Map



Flying Acres Historic District

Flying Acres Historic District exemplifies post-war, twentieth-century suburban development in Mesa. The district is bounded by Grand Street on the west, Macdonald Street (formerly Orangewood Road) on the east and encompasses W. 8th Place (formerly Mountview Drive, a.k.a. Mountainview Drive) and W. 9th Street (formerly Echelon Drive).

Flying Acres was subdivided in 1946 from about 5.5 acres of land owned by Jake L. Wilk Jr., former training and operations officer at Williams Field, and his wife, Vivian Mae Wilk. At the time of subdivision, there were three already constructed homes on the land. The majority of the new subdivision consisted of ranch style homes on almost symmetrical lots facing north or south on the two east-west streets (W 8th Pl and W 9th St).

Architectural Styles and Building Types:

Flying Acres rapidly filled with ranch styles houses, with most constructed in 1950 and 1953. The district characterizes population expansion and technological advances after the war. Represented building types and architectural styles include:

- few International Style
- Ranch
- Early/Transitional Ranch
- Styled Ranch (including French, Colonial, Tudor, and Polynesian influences)

Development Pattern and Streetscape:

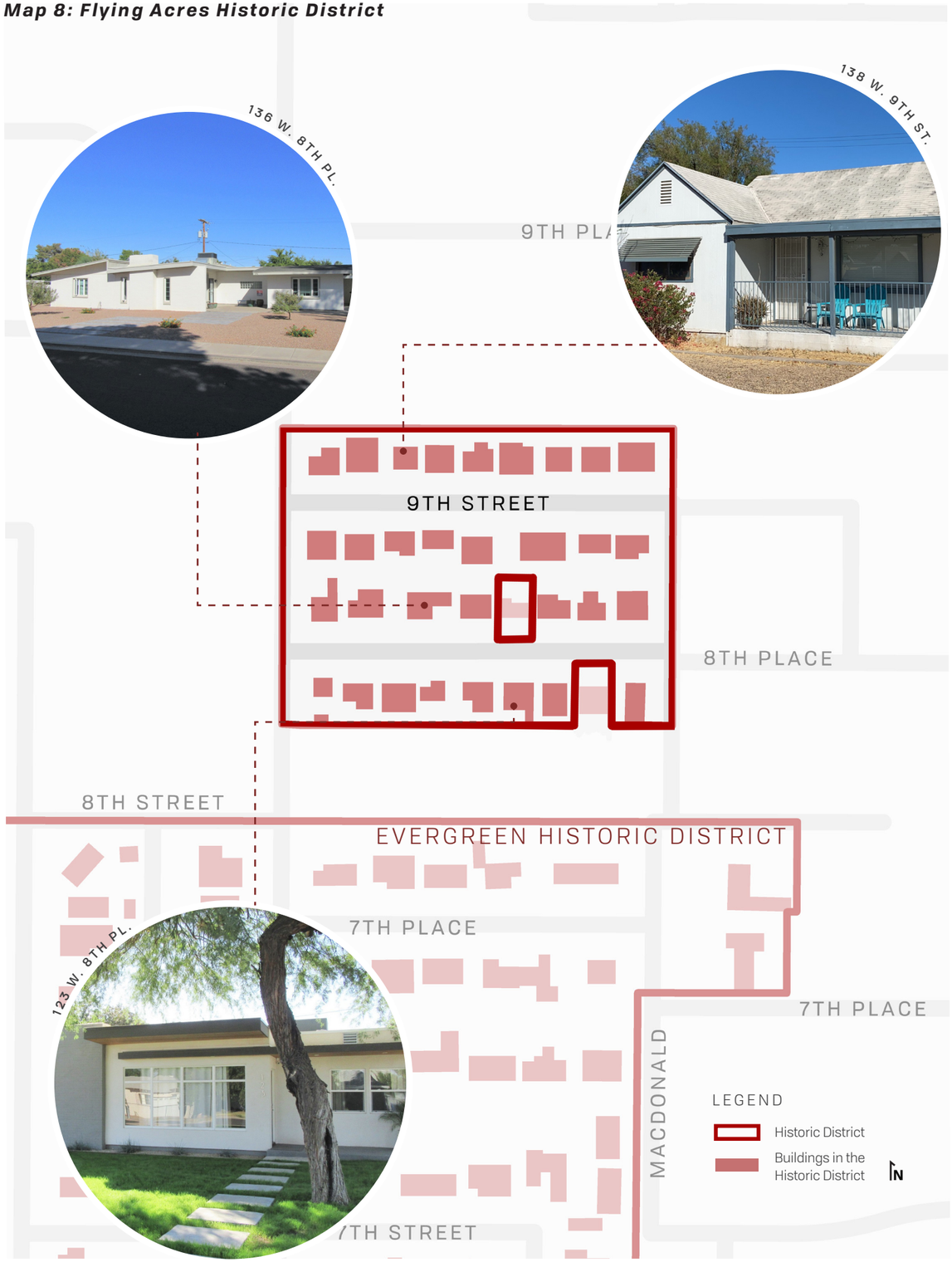
The Flying Acres subdivision was recorded in November of 1946 and was subdivided into 36 almost symmetrical lots with the help of civil engineer, W.T. Keplinger. The name, Flying Acres, was undoubtedly connected to Major Jake Wilk's connection to Williams Field and it is likely that the early street names (Echelon and Mountainview Drive) reflect Wilk's profession as well.

The streetscape of the Flying Acres district is synonymous with other post-war neighborhoods constructed in the region at this time. Unlike Mesa's original townsite, Flying Acres did not employ parkways. Rather, sidewalks were integrated directly with the curbs and gutters. The growing importance of the car is also represented by visually prominent driveways, garages, and carports.

When subdivided, the landscape likely included young trees, but over time, the neighborhood's vegetation has matured. Today, front yards vary between grass lawns and gravel; much of the district, however, is surrounded by scrubs, plantings, and mature trees of pine, palm, mesquite and deciduous varieties, which together create a wide canopy of shade across the streetscape.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic District: Designated 2018	
Period of Significance	1940-1957

Map 8: Flying Acres Historic District



Fraser Fields Historic District

Fraser Fields Historic District is a well-preserved example of an upper middle-class ranch-style community, developed on farmland outside of the Mesa townsite after World War II. The district consists primarily of one residential subdivision, platted in 1946, and encompasses an internalized loop street layout. Fraser Fields is bounded by University Drive (formerly Fourth Street) to the north, East Main Street (formerly Apache Trail) to the south, Miller Drive to the east, and Horne Drive to the west.

Initially designed as an exclusive residential area, Fraser Fields featured large lots and a mix of multi-family dwellings placed strategically to buffer the neighborhood from surrounding commercial zones and major streets. The homes feature expansive façades, large steel casement windows, and generous lawns. The district is home to varied architectural materials, from painted concrete masonry units (CMU) to fired adobe, and a variety of Ranch style homes, epitomizing thoughtful craftsmanship and architectural diversity.

Architectural Styles and Building Types:

Developed in the 17 years following World War II, most residences in Fraser Fields are one-story, expansive Ranch Style homes positioned prominently at the front and center of their lots, with single- or double-carports at one end. Many homes in the historic district have maintained their original character due to the generous size of the houses and ample backyard space. Represented homes in the district include:

- Early/Transitional Ranch
- Classic/California Ranch
- Styled Ranch (including Spanish influences)
- Rambling Ranch
- few Minimal Traditional multi-family residences

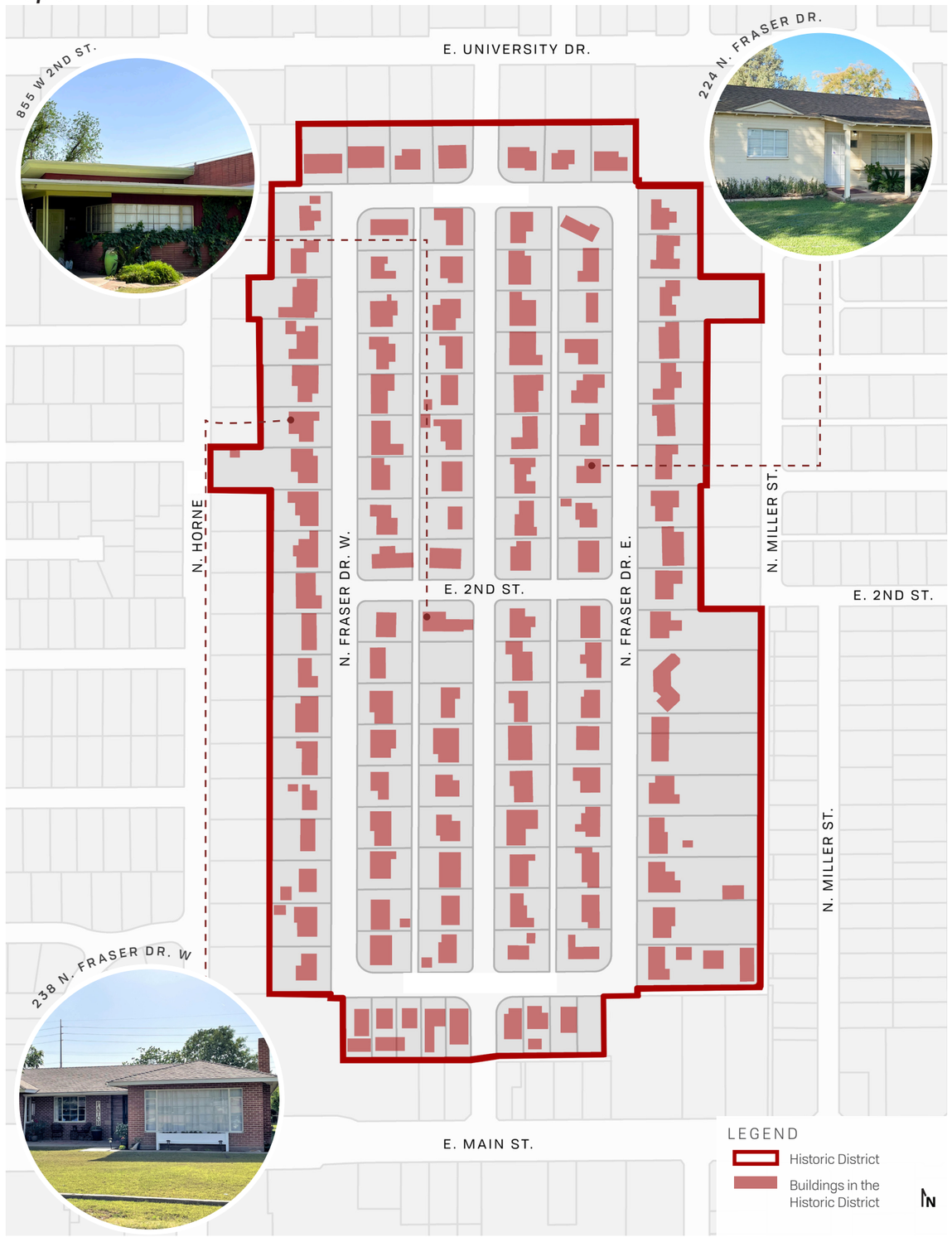
Development Pattern and Streetscape:

Fraser Fields was originally purchased by Hyrum Smith Phelps in the early 1900s. He built the first house where "Bill Johnson's Big Apple" restaurant now stands. Hyrum later sold the land to Dr. Jack Fraser, who eventually sold it to Passey Investment Corporation. It was subdivided in 1946 as Fraser Fields. The Mesa Journal Tribune advertised it as "Mesa's Most Exclusive Subdivision." The 80-acre development featured lots at least two-thirds of an acre in size—almost double the average city lot. These lots had at least 100 feet of street frontage and were 128 feet deep.

Fraser Fields represents the first major subdivision in Mesa designed for affluent and middle-class families moving from the city center to the suburban outskirts. The streetscape is a character-defining feature of the district with its secluded loop street layout, uniform setbacks, and flood irrigation system that enables the growth of mature trees and broad green lawns.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic District: Designated 2003 National Register Historic: District Listed 2010	
Period of Significance	1946-1962

Map 9: Fraser Fields Historic District



Historic Landmarks

A historical landmark is an individual building, structure, site, or object that is recognized for its outstanding historical, cultural, or architectural significance. Unlike historic districts which are significant based on collective context, historic landmarks are considered significant individually, and therefore are independently designated.

Generally, properties must be at least 50 years old and meet certain criteria to be eligible for designation as a Historic Landmark. For local designation, this criteria is based on the Mesa Zoning Ordinance, while National Register listing is based on criteria outlined in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Mesa is home to **twenty-seven landmarks** with historic designation, and many more considered eligible but not yet designated.

Thirteen of the twenty-seven historic landmarks are listed on the Mesa Historic Property Register (MHPR), four exist on both the MHPR and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and fourteen of the historic landmarks are only listed on the NRHP. It is important to note that several of the NRHP listed properties are located within historic districts on the MHPR.

Listing on the NRHP is honorary and may provide access to certain preservation incentives. Properties designated on the MHPR, whether in a district or listed individually, are within Historic Preservation Overlays which ensure exterior alterations, additions, and new construction are compatible with the historic district through the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) review process.

LOCALLY DESIGNATED HISTORIC LANDMARKS

Mesa's locally designated historic landmarks listed on the Mesa Historic Property Register include the following*:

1. **Alma Ward Meeting House (809 West Main Street)**
2. Federal Building (26 North Macdonald)
3. First United Methodist Church (15 East 1st Avenue)
4. **Irving School (155 North Center Street)**
5. Isley (Phil) House (412 North Macdonald)
6. James Macdonald House (307 East 1st Street)
7. Larkin Fitch Farmhouse (945 North Center Street)
8. **Lehi School (2345 North Horne)**
9. Mesa Public Library/Information Technology (IT) Building (59 East 1st Street)
10. Mt. Calvary Baptist Church (430 North Lewis)
11. Nile Theater (105 West Main Street)
12. **Ponderosa II (602 South Edgewater Drive)**
13. Ramon Mendoza House (126 North Pomeroy)

* **bolded landmarks** are also listed on the National Register of Historic Places

NATIONAL REGISTER LISTED PROPERTIES

Mesa's historic properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places include the following*:

1. Alhambra Hotel (43 South Macdonald)
2. **Alma Ward Meeting House (809 West Main Street)**
3. **Angulo-Hostetter House (150 North Wilbur)**
4. Buckhorn Baths Motel (5900 East Main Street)
5. Dr. Lucius Charles Alston House (453 North Pima)
6. Falcon Field World War II Aviation Hangars (4800 East Falcon Drive)
7. **Irving School (155 North Center Street)**
8. **Lehi School (2345 North Horne)**
9. Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki (formerly Mesa Grande) (Address Restricted)
10. **Mesa Journal-Tribune FHA Demonstration Home (238 West 2nd Street)**
11. **Mesa Woman's Club (200 North Macdonald)**
12. Park of the Canals (North Horne from Utah Ditch to Mesa-Consolidated Canal)
13. **Ponderosa II (602 South Edgewater Drive)**
14. Robert Scott House (2230 East Grandview Street)
15. **Strauch Fuller House (148 North Macdonald)**
16. **Spangler-Wilbur House (128 North Macdonald)**
17. **Sirrine House (160 North Center Street)**
18. Williams Air Force Base (Multiple Resources)

* **bolded properties** are listed on the Mesa Historic Property Register, either individually or within one of Mesa's locally designated historic districts

Certain properties may be listed on both the NRHP and the MHPR, while others may only be on one register. Only properties listed on the MHPR, either individually or within a district, will require a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to commencing a project. However, property owners making modifications to properties listed only on the NRHP are encouraged to follow best practices and work with the Mesa Historic Preservation Office.

Alma Ward Meeting House (809 West Main Street)

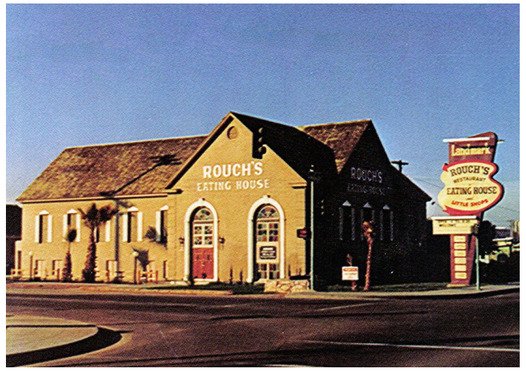
The Alma Ward Meeting House was constructed c. 1908 to serve an influx of Mormon families settling along nearby Alma School Road, in the area known as “Stringtown.” For nearly 50 years, the property functioned as a place of worship and a locus for civic and social events for Mormon and non-Mormon community members alike. In 1937, the Meeting House was enlarged, removing its original Mission Revival-style façade and subsequently redesigned in the Colonial Revival Style seen today. By 1953, the ward’s congregation had grown and was relocated to a new chapel.

The property has exchanged ownership several times since, occupied by the Producers Life Insurance Company, Mesa Community College’s first campus, and various dining establishments such as Rouch’s Schoolhouse Restaurant, later renamed the Landmark Restaurant. The building's surroundings have evolved with the growth of the City, changing from a sparsely developed rural area on the town’s outskirts to its present environment characterized by busy arterial streets and multiple commercial and residential building types.

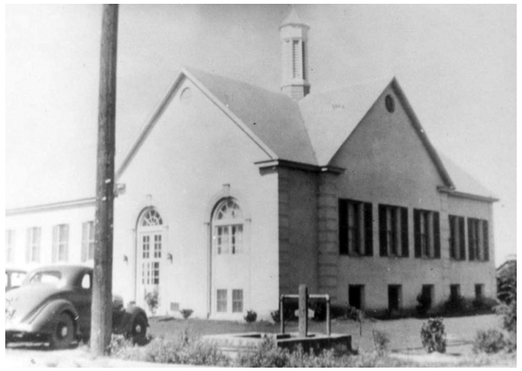
HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2004 National Register of Historic Places: Designated 2006	
Construction Date:	c. 1908-1911/1937



Mission Revivial façade c. 1911 (Mesa Historical Museum)



Rouch's c. 1970s (Mesa Preservation Foundation)



Post-1937 expansion c. 1940s (Mesa Historical Museum)



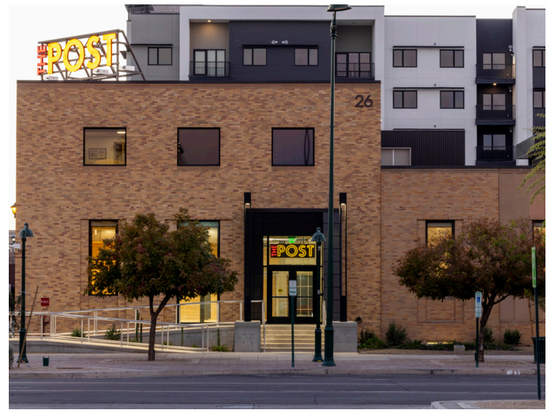
Alma Ward Meeting House, view NW from S Extension Rd (2025)



Post Office prior to 1960 (Mesa Preservation Foundation)



Post Office after 1960 addition (Arizona Museum of Natural History)



The Post, view W from N Macdonald (2025)

Federal Building (26 North Macdonald)

The Federal Building was built as the post office in 1936-1937, as part of the Works Progress Administration program. The original one-story building was constructed in the Federal Moderne style and became one of the finest buildings in the City upon its completion. In 1960, a two-story addition and loading dock was added on its southern end. Despite the expansion, the post office moved operations to a new location on North Center c. 1970. The building housed offices for various federal agencies until it was granted to the City of Mesa in 2002. In 2018, Mesa voters approved a $7.4 million bond issue to convert the building into a dynamic community event space called The Post. The update preserved many architectural features of the building in the new design.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2004	
Construction Date:	1936-1937/1960

First United Methodist Church (15 East 1st Avenue)

The First United Methodist Church holds the distinction as being Mesa's longest continuously operating church, with the congregation in existence since the late 1800s. The church was designed by Martin Ray Young, Jr, who, in 1948, was the first architect to establish a practice in Mesa. Young designed more than 1600 projects in his career.

The church's 120-foot steeple has been a part of downtown Mesa's skyline since it was constructed in the early 1950s. The church presently on the Historic Landmark site followed two no longer extant structures, including a c. 1895 one-room brick building with gothic-revival detailing and a 1913 Spanish Colonial style church. Today, the Historic Landmark site includes the sanctuary and steeple, Stewart Chapel, and the bell tower atop the columbarium (mausoleum), which was moved to its present location from the no longer extant 1913 church.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2014	
Construction Date:	1951



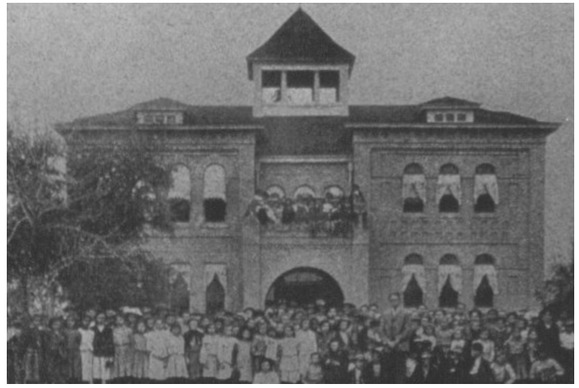
Image of c. 1895 one-room church (First United Methodist Church)



Image of 1913 Church (First United Methodist Church)



First United Methodist Church, view SW from E 1st Ave (2025)



Old North School prior to demolition (Mesa Historical Museum)



Irving School, n.d. (Arizona Museum of Natural History)



Historic Irving School, view SE from N Center (2024)

Irving School (155 North Center Street)

The Irving School is remarkable for its unique blend of the institutional Federal Moderne Style with the residential Ranch Style, both popular yet divergent architectural expressions during its time of construction in 1936. The building was funded through the Public Works Administration and is one of the surviving examples of Federal depression era public works in Mesa.

The school, named after American writer Washington Irving, was designed by the Lescher and Mahoney architectural firm, a prominent Phoenix architectural firm that specialized in the design of school buildings. It was built on the site of the "North School," which operated from 1899 to c. 1935. The City of Mesa purchased the property in 1976 and it later became known as the Mesa Arts Center with a newly renovated auditorium for the Mesa Children's Theater. Today, the historic school is home to Mesa Public Schools' Creative and Performing Arts Center.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 1998 National Register of Historic Places: Designated 2000	
Construction Date:	1936

Isley (Phil) House (412 North Macdonald)

The "Phil Isley" house was constructed in 1922 and was originally located at 643 East Main Street. It is a classic example of a brick, craftsman bungalow. A motel was built on the original site in the 1940s, with the house serving as the office. In 2005, the house was purchased and moved to its current location (412 North Macdonald) within the Evergreen Historic District. The house sits on a flag lot and is not visible from Macdonald.

Phil Isley (1886-1962) played an important role in Mesa's history. He served as president of the Lions Club, the Hiram Club, and the Mesa Chamber of Commerce. Throughout his career, he was the Maricopa County Treasurer, served on the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, and was a member of Arizona's State Legislature.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2016	
Construction Date:	1922/relocated in 2005



Isley House prior to its relocation in 2005



Macdonald House following restoration c. late 1990s



Macdonald brothers, James is on far right (Mesa Historical Museum)



James Macdonald House, view S from E 1st St. (2024)

James Macdonald House (307 East 1st Street)

Built between 1916 and 1918, this two-story vernacular building was home to early Mesa pioneer, James Macdonald. Macdonald worked as a police officer, farmer, and builder and was the son of Alexander Findlay Macdonald, Mesa's first mayor. James assisted in the construction of the Arizona LDS Temple in 1919.

The MacDonald family occupied the house through the mid-1940s. In the late 1990s, the house was purchased by Diane Hughes and her husband, Darwin, who restored it into a wedding venue, known as the "Antique Wedding House." Today, the property continues to host wedding celebrations in this historically rich home.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 1998	
Construction Date:	1916-1918

Larkin Fitch Farmhouse (945 North Center Street)

The Fitch Farmhouse was built in 1933 and originally sat on over 400 acres of farmland owned by Larkin Fitch. The Fitch Farmhouse is an example of a Tudor Revival style house which includes a second story sleeping porch constructed with adobe bricks. The property is one of the few remaining examples of Mesa's agricultural heritage along North Center Street. Over the years, the extensive agricultural land in this area has been replaced with residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

Larkin Fitch played a prominent role in Mesa's farming industry and was the president of the Mesa Farm Bureau and served as a member of the Council and Board of Directors of the Salt River Project. Fitch began his farming career on a small piece of land north of Baseline Road and went on to raise sheep for 20 years at the Fitch Farm, with as many as 1,200 ewes. The Fitch family donated part of the original farmland to the City of Mesa for a portion of Fitch Park.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2010	
Construction Date:	1933



Fitch Farm and Farmhouse, view SE from N Center St., in 2001



East elevation of Fitch Farmhouse (2024)



South elevation of Fitch Farmhouse (2024)



Mesa Historical Museum, Lehi School (2024)

Lehi School (2345 North Horne)

The Lehi School is built on land donated to the Lehi community in the 1880s by early settler Henry C. Rogers' family. The main school building was constructed in 1913 and exhibits a mixture of Neoclassical and Mission Revival styles. The school replaced an earlier one-room adobe schoolhouse, a replica of which can be found in the front of the existing building. The 1913 school was expanded in the 1920's with the addition of two new classrooms and during the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration made additional improvements, including the addition of the auditorium and annex building.

Despite improvements over the years, the school was condemned by the Mesa School District in 1976 and slated for destruction. The City of Mesa purchased the site and resold it to the Mesa Historical Society in 1986, who repurposed the building as a museum. The property still operates as the Mesa Historical Museum and in 2025 the auditorium was renovated to house the Arizona Baseball Museum.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2001 National Register of Historic Places: Designated 2001	
Construction Date:	1913/1939

Mesa Public Library / IT Building (59 East 1st Street)

Built as a library for a growing city in 1959, this landmark is one of several midcentury modern municipal buildings that comprise a portion of Mesa's City Center. The building was designed by the local architectural firm of Horlbeck, Hickman and Associates, a firm active in the Valley following World War II. The building retains many of its original features including a floating terrazzo stairway, hanging light fixtures, decorative breeze blocks along exterior walls, and a portion of its distinctive wave-shaped concrete covered walkways.

By 1979, Mesa's population had expanded to 140,000 and a new, bigger library space was needed. The library moved to 64 East 1st Street in 1981, and shortly after, the former library building was remodeled and converted into the City's Information Technology Building. Today, it is part of Arizona State University's (ASU) Media and Immersive eXperience (MIX) Center, known as 'The Studios.'

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2013	
Construction Date:	1959



Mesa Public Library building c. 1960



The building prior to renovation as The Studios (2021)



The Studios at Mesa City Center, following renovation (2024)



Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, view W from N Lewis (2024)

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church (430 North Lewis)

The Mount Calvary Baptist Church was built in 1961 and is the oldest predominantly Black Church in Mesa. The church is located within the Washington-Escobedo Heritage Neighborhood and is significant for its association with the early settlement of Mesa by African Americans and the church's long-standing influence on the neighborhood and City.

The church was initially established as a mission and was led by traveling missionaries. Prior to formally organizing as a church, the congregation met under a tree in the front yard of the late Clara McPherson, wife and mother of the first Black family to reside in Mesa. Over its long history, the Mount Calvary Baptist Church occupied several locations and in 2006 relocated to Broadway Road. Today, the property is used by the Calvary Korean Community Church.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2002	
Construction Date:	1961

The Nile Theater (105 West Main Street)

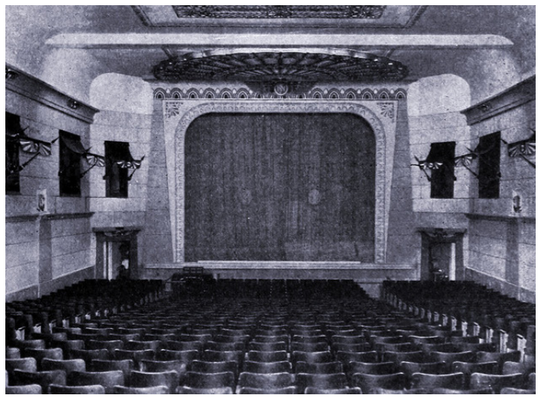
The Nile Theater was built in 1924 and served as Mesa's first movie house. The building was constructed by George A. Johnson, who utilized locally kilned Lehi brick. When it first opened, the theater was state-of-the-art with an early air-cooling system, a large central stage, sloped floor seating, and Art Deco design influences with Egyptian motifs. The theater played a crucial role in inspiring the construction of other theaters in the Valley, including the Orpheum Theater in Phoenix, which was constructed four years after The Nile.

A renovation of the façade was completed in 2018-2019 to reveal some of the building's original architectural features including its brick exterior walls, glazed storefront, and historic windows. The Nile now operates as a music venue with a coffee shop, preserving an important piece of Mesa's architectural history.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2023	
Construction Date:	1924



The Nile Theater in 1924 (Arizona Republican, Sept. 1, 1924)



Interior of the Nile in 1924 (Arizona Republican, Sept. 1, 1924)



The Nile following 2018-2019 façade renovation (2024)



Set for Bonanza showing the model Ponderosa



The Ponderosa II, view N from S Edgewater Dr. (2024)



Ponderosa II builder, Nick Donato (left), his wife Iris (center), and Lorne Greene



An example of one of the western-themed plans available to purchasers of homes in the Apache Country Club Estates (ACCE sales brochure, 1963).

Ponderosa II (602 South Edgewater Drive)

The Ponderosa II House was built in 1962-1963 as a seasonal residence for actor Lorne Greene, who played Ben Cartwright, the patriarch of the Cartwright family in the popular 1960s TV series "Bonanza." It was designed to closely replicate the fictional Ponderosa ranch house, thus its name Ponderosa II. The house is located on a prominent lot adjacent to the community's golf course and is one of the most elaborate Ranch homes in Mesa. It is a highly stylized Ranch, evoking Old West design in the form of board-and-batten, wood railing, and decorative wagon wheels. The Ponderosa II was the first home built in the former Apache Country Club Estates subdivision, now referred to as Golden Hills and Arizona Golf Resort, and was the flagship home used in promoting land sales and new home construction.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2014 National Register of Historic Places: Designated 2018	
Construction Date:	1962-1963

Ramon Mendoza House (126 North Pomeroy)

The Ramon Mendoza House was the home of Ramon G. Mendoza, Mesa's first Hispanic Chief of Police. The adobe home, adjacent to the Wilbur Historic District, was built by Manuel Flores in 1942. The property was acquired by Mendoza in 1946 where he resided until his death in 1999.

Mendoza was born in Mesa in 1914, the son of early settler and former Mesa police officer Ramon S. Mendoza. Ramon G. Mendoza grew up in a time when segregation was still commonplace in Mesa. He attended the Webster School, a segregated school built for Mexican American children, and later graduated from Mesa High School in 1932. Mendoza became a police officer in 1942, was appointed Police Chief in 1969, and served in this capacity until his retirement in 1978. He served on the force for a total of 36 years.

During his time with the Mesa Police Department, he attended the FBI Academy in Washington, D.C. and under his tenure the department became computerized, installed a closed-circuit camera system in the jail, built a new police headquarters, and brought police dogs on the force. Chief Mendoza was an active volunteer, supporting the Cubs Spring Training, the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, and the Sister Cities program.

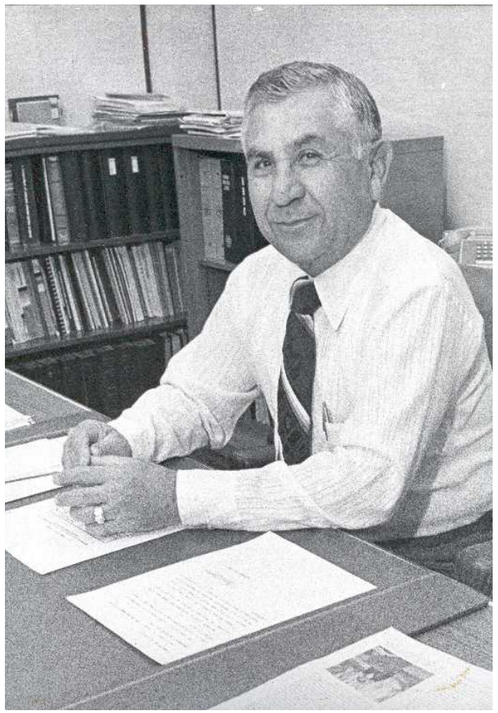
HISTORIC DESIGNATION	
Mesa Local Historic Landmark: Designated 2001	
Construction Date:	1942



Mendoza's father, Ramon S. Mendoza, on Police Department in 1924



Ramon Mendoza House, view SW from N Pomeroy (2024)



Photograph of Ramon G. Mendoza (date unknown)

To learn more about Mesa's history and historic landmarks and districts, please visit:

Mesa Historic Property Register
www.mesaaz.gov/mhpr

Mesa Historic Preservation Office
www.mesaaz.gov/hp

National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places
www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister

Mesa Room at the Main Library
www.mesalibrary.org/research/mesa-room

Mesa Historical Museum
www.mesahistoricalmuseum.com

Mesa Preservation Foundation
www.mesapreservation.org

Appendix E - Cultural Heritage & Heritage Neighborhoods

Cultural heritage encompasses the places, objects, traditions, knowledge, and practices passed down through generations within a community. These elements contribute to community identity and help connect our past, present, and future.

Mesa's diverse cultural heritage is reflected in a wide range of places and resources, including locally and nationally designated historic districts, buildings, and structures, recognized Heritage Neighborhoods, archaeological sites and deposits, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural places, and other places that may be historically or culturally significant but have not yet received formal designation.

Mesa's cultural heritage is not always readily visible or apparent. Cultural heritage can be found beneath the ground, within the landscape, and in the traditions, memories, stories, and practices that connect communities to place. Like the built environment, these less visible aspects of cultural heritage should be considered during project planning, design, and construction. Projects within the city must comply with local, state, and federal laws governing the protection of cultural resources and applicants should consult with the City of Mesa's Historic Preservation Office early in the planning process to identify if any cultural resource concerns are present.

Archaeological & Cultural Sites

Mesa is home to over 250 recorded archaeological sites, many miles of buried prehistoric and historic canals, eight national and/or locally designated historic districts, two recognized Heritage Neighborhoods, and 27 national and/or locally designated historic landmarks. Together, these resources reflect a rich and diverse heritage that span thousands of years and include the histories and experiences of Native American, Spanish, Mexican, Euroamerican, African American, Asian American, and other communities that have shaped Mesa over time.

Many of these places and histories continue to hold meaning for living communities and descendants. In 2024, the City of Mesa formally acknowledged that the lands that comprise present-day Mesa are culturally affiliated with the O'Odham, Piipaash, and their ancestors. The City of Mesa further recognized that we gather on the homeland of the Native people and their ancestors, who have inhabited this landscape from time immemorial to the present day.

Archaeological evidence affirms this long history and indicates that humans have occupied portions of south-central Arizona, including the Phoenix Basin, for more than 10,000 years. The landscape within the City of Mesa is sacred and reflects cultural values central to the O'Odham (known as the Pima) and the Piipaash (known as the Maricopa) way of life and their self-definition.

Ancestral O'Odham Communities

The most numerous archaeological sites in Mesa are associated with what archaeologists refer to as Hohokam, an archaeological tradition that flourished in south-central Arizona between approximately 400-1450 CE. Centered in the Phoenix Valley, the Hohokam archaeological tradition is represented by the cultural and material remains of the people who lived throughout the region before European contact.

Hohokam archaeological sites within Mesa and the broader Phoenix Basin represent the beginning of systemic agriculture within the Sonoran Desert, and include remnants of large permanent villages, agricultural lands, expansive and sophisticated canal systems, and distinctive material culture including pottery, basketry, stone tools, and shell jewelry.

The term Hohokam is derived from the O'Odham word *huhugam*, meaning "deceased ancestor." O'Odham communities today maintain direct, lineal connections to the people and material culture that archaeologists have termed "Hohokam." The people who identify as O'Odham mainly reside at the Ak-Chin Indian Community, the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC), the Tohono O'Odham Nation, and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC). Other Tribal Nations also have longstanding cultural connections to Mesa and the lower Salt River Valley.

Occupation of Mesa and the broader Phoenix Basin continued after 1450 CE. O'Odham oral histories recall villages in the lower Salt River Valley persisting into the early nineteenth century, while archaeological evidence demonstrates strong connections between ancestral and modern O'Odham material culture.



View of Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki (2024)

Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki

Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki (pronounced "CHUH-dag MOO-vahl VAH-kee") is a significant O'Odham ancestral site, built near the head-gates of one of the largest and most sophisticated networks of irrigation canals created in the Americas.

Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki featured a large platform mound that served as a civic and gathering center where administrative and religious activities were performed. It is estimated that the site controlled over 27,000 acres of highly productive farmland supporting a large community.

The City of Mesa and Arizona Museum of Natural History act as stewards of Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki and, in partnership with the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and the Gila River Indian Community, work to ensure the site's protection.

The site, formerly known as Mesa Grande, was renamed in November 2024. The name Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki, in the O'Odham language, means "Blue Fly's place of dwelling" or "Blue Fly's house" and comes from a series of songs originating at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, located only about one mile from the ancestral site.



Tribal leaders and City of Mesa officials at the renaming of Mesa Grande Cultural Park to Sce:dagĭ Mu:val Va'aki (2024)

Thoa Vahkoan

Thoa Vahkoan, formerly known as Park of the Canals, preserves a visible portion of Mesa's long history of irrigation and agriculture within a 31-acre public park in central Mesa. The park preserves approximately 4,500 feet of Huhugam (Ancestral O'Odham) canals, along with sections of canals later constructed and modified beginning in the late nineteenth century. The site illustrates how communities have shaped, maintained, and adapted the landscape through irrigation.

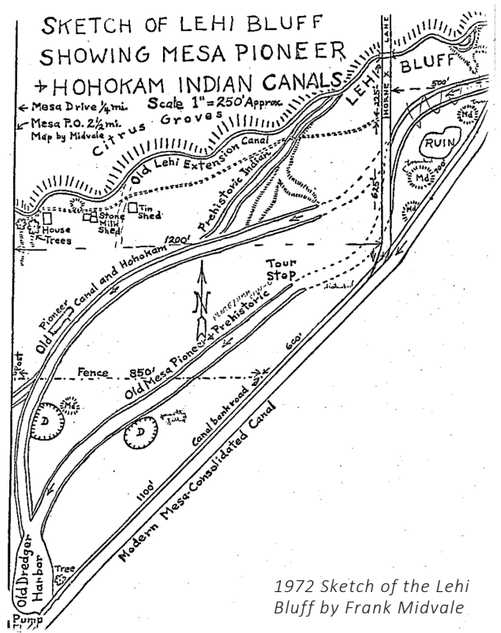
The prehistoric canals preserved at the park were part of a much larger network engineered by Ancestral O'Odham communities to move water from the Salt River to agricultural fields and settlements throughout the valley. These canals transformed portions of the Sonoran Desert into productive agricultural landscapes and required substantial knowledge, labor, and cooperation to construct and maintain. The canal system also shaped the environment around it, creating areas of vegetation and flowing water that supported plants, animals, and birds.

These connections to the landscape extend beyond the physical remains of the canals. O'Odham cultural traditions describe the plants, animals, water, and other features of the Salt River Valley as integral to ancestral life and continue to express relationships with these places today. To better reflect these connections, the site was renamed Thoa Vahkoan in 2026, meaning White Egret (Snowy Egret). The name comes from an O'Odham song of the Thoa Vahkoan which tells of birds flying on top of the water as observed by the Oriole bird from along the riverbanks. Traditionally, shore birds with long bills, necks, and legs have been painted on Huhugam ceramic vessels due to the prominence of these birds in this area.

The City of Mesa acts as a steward of Thoa Vahkoan. Today, the park includes the Brinton Desert Botanical Garden, playground, and open spaces, providing opportunities for recreation, education, and interpretation. Together, the preserved canals and contemporary park landscape demonstrate how archaeological resources can remain part of a living community while connecting residents and visitors to Mesa's deep agricultural and cultural history.



Historic imagery of National Register-listed Thoa Vahkoan (c. 1975)



1972 Sketch of the Lehi Bluff by Frank Midvale

Heritage Neighborhood Program

The City of Mesa's Heritage Neighborhood Program recognizes neighborhoods with unique historic, social, or cultural significance that do not have local or national historic district designation. Today, Mesa is home to two recognized Heritage Neighborhoods: the **Washington-Escobedo Neighborhood**, recognized in 2016, and the **Lehi Neighborhood**, recognized in 2023.

The program provides an opportunity to celebrate neighborhood heritage, encourage community-based preservation efforts, and increase public awareness of the history and character of neighborhoods throughout Mesa.

Heritage Neighborhood recognition is honorary and is intended to support neighborhood pride, identity, and a sense of place. Unlike historic district designation, Heritage Neighborhood recognition does not impose additional zoning restrictions or provide historic preservation tax incentives.

The process is community-driven, allowing residents to document and share the history, people, events, traditions, and places that have contributed to their neighborhood's unique identity. Neighbors interested in applying for Heritage Neighborhood recognition are encouraged to contact the Historic Preservation Office for guidance with the application process.

Benefits of Being a Heritage Neighborhood

Recognition as a Mesa Heritage Neighborhood commemorates a neighborhood's historic and cultural values and brings public awareness to preservation efforts. The program supports neighborhood pride, community cohesion, and fosters a greater appreciation for the places and stories that contribute to a neighborhood's identity and social fabric.

Preparing an application provides an opportunity for neighbors to work together to research and document their community's history and heritage. This grass roots effort can strengthen connections among residents and encourage a deeper understanding and appreciation of the relationship between heritage and the built environment.

Following recognition, City staff may work with the neighborhood on public outreach materials, historic documentation, and educational opportunities.

Criteria for Recognition

A neighborhood may be considered for Heritage Neighborhood recognition when it demonstrates the following characteristics:

1. The majority of the neighborhood was originally developed at least 50 years ago.
2. The overall character of the neighborhood, including the types and scale of buildings and other physical features, remains generally consistent with its historic period.
3. Documentation demonstrates that residents and/or business owners historically worked together to establish a unique and identifiable neighborhood character that distinguished the area from its surroundings and continues to influence the neighborhood today.
4. The neighborhood retains unique and identifiable physical characteristics that contribute to its historic fabric, such as building scale, materials, colors, proportions, or other historic, associative, or contextual values.
5. Residents can document the people, events, traditions, and/or cultural heritage that contributed to the neighborhood's historic character, identity, and development.



Residents from the Washington-Escobedo Heritage Neighborhood mapping places of historic and cultural significance within the community (2023)

Washington-Escobedo Heritage Neighborhood

The Washington-Escobedo Heritage Neighborhood is located northeast of downtown Mesa and is generally bounded by 6th Street to the north, University Drive to the south, Center Street to the west, and extends east to include the Escobedo area along Mesa Drive between East University Drive and 6th Street. The neighborhood developed primarily between approximately 1910 and 1980 and includes the historically distinct Washington Park and Escobedo areas.

Washington-Escobedo has an important history as a center of Mesa's African-American and Mexican-American communities. The area's early subdivisions included smaller, more affordable lots and did not carry the same racial and land-use restrictions found in other subdivisions. Mexican-American families primarily occupied the eastern portion of the area, while African-American families primarily occupied the western portion.

Booker T. Washington School served as an important educational, social, and cultural center for the African-American community. The neighborhood was also home to individuals who made significant contributions to Mesa's history, including Dr. Lucis Charles Alston, Mesa's first African-American physician, whose former home and office at 453 N. Pima is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Veora Erma Johnson, who began teaching at Booker T. Washington School in 1927 and later became Arizona's first African-American principal, was another prominent member of the community.



Booker T. Washington Elementary School (Mesa Historical Museum)

The western portion of the neighborhood is characterized by small, narrow lots and modest, single-family residences. Historic homes are typically single-story, with the long axis of the building perpendicular to the street, a front porch, a carport or garage located to one side, and a low fence defining the front yard. The neighborhood also historically included a variety of small-scale nonresidential uses, including churches, schools, offices, and retail businesses. This combination of small lots, building form, street pattern, and mix of uses contributed to the neighborhood's distinctive social and cultural character.

The Escobedo Apartments were constructed in 1941 to house African-American soldiers stationed at Williams Air Force Base. Following World War II, the City of Mesa assumed ownership of the apartments and leased them to low-income families. Although the apartment area has since been redeveloped with larger buildings, the new development maintains connections to the neighborhood through its relationship to the street and an open street system that integrates with the surrounding area.

Over time, the neighborhood has experienced significant change, including the loss and alteration of historic buildings, vacant lots, redevelopment, and the introduction of newer housing and commercial development. Development along University Drive and Center Street has historically been more mixed in use, while the interior residential areas retain a predominantly single-family character. Despite these changes, surviving historic buildings, lots, streets, and other features continue to convey the neighborhood's history and development.

The Washington-Escobedo Heritage Neighborhood is therefore characterized not by a uniform architectural style, but by its scale, lot pattern, building form, streetscape, mix of uses, and cultural history. New development and alterations should respect these characteristics while allowing for contemporary architectural expression. A mix of uses may remain appropriate where they are compatible with the scale and character of the neighborhood, with single-family residential uses continuing to be the dominant pattern within the interior residential areas.

Map 10: Washington-Escobedo Heritage Neighborhood



Lehi Heritage Neighborhood

The Lehi neighborhood is generally located east of Center Street and north of McKellips Road, extending to the Consolidated Canal. Lehi is the site of Mesa's original Mormon settlement, established in 1877, and played an important role in the early development of the community. The original settlement was centered near the present-day intersection of Horne and Lehi Roads. Historic resources, including Lehi School and the Lehi Store, reflect the area's early role as a rural agricultural community.

From its beginning, Lehi was shaped by agriculture, irrigation, and its location along the Salt River. The area has a much longer history of agriculture and irrigation, with ancestral Sonoran Desert communities, the ancestors of modern O'odham people, developing extensive canal systems throughout the Salt River Valley. O'odham and Piipaash communities continued agricultural and irrigation traditions in the area, and members of these communities assisted early Lehi settlers with agricultural work and the development of irrigation ditches. In 1877, members of the Piipaash and O'odham communities assisted with the construction of a new canal system serving the Lehi settlement. This system became known as the Utah Canal, portions of which remain visible along Lehi Road today.

Lehi's early development was therefore closely tied to the Salt River, its agricultural landscape, and the irrigation systems that made settlement possible. The community's history includes the continuing presence and contributions of O'odham and Piipaash peoples, as well as the later settlement of Mormon pioneers in 1877. These overlapping histories are an important part of the broader cultural landscape of Lehi and the Salt River Valley.

Lehi's early development reflected characteristics associated with traditional Mormon settlement patterns, including a grid of wide roads, large blocks and lots, open spaces, agricultural uses, livestock, and roadside irrigation ditches. Portions of the historic Utah Canal remain visible along Lehi Road and illustrate the importance of irrigation to the community's development.

Lehi retains a distinctive rural character that is closely connected to this history. Large lots, open spaces, agricultural activity, livestock, barns and other outbuildings, open irrigation ditches, and wide roadways with informal shoulders remain important features of the neighborhood. Homes are generally set back within large properties, and historic and newer buildings often reflect agricultural or rural residential forms. Lehi Red Brick, produced locally beginning in the late nineteenth century, is another distinctive material found throughout the community and reflects the area's early industrial and architectural history.

Although Lehi has experienced new residential development, subdivision of some properties, and changes associated with surrounding growth, many aspects of its historic landscape and development pattern remain. The City's Lehi development regulations recognize the importance of maintaining the area's rural character, including large lots, livestock uses, open drainage and irrigation systems, informal road shoulders, and reduced levels of street lighting and infrastructure. These features contribute to a quieter, lower-density environment that remains distinctly different from the surrounding urban areas of Mesa.

The historic character of Lehi is expressed through the relationship between buildings, large lots, roads, irrigation systems, agricultural landscapes, and open spaces, rather than through a single architectural style. These elements, together with the area's early settlement history and its connections to the surrounding landscape and communities, reinforce Lehi's significance as Mesa's first settlement and one of the city's most distinctive historic communities.



Utah Ditch (Arizona Museum of Natural History)

Map 11: Lehi Heritage Neighborhood



MESA AZ

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN GUIDELINES

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