

City of Mesa Historic Preservation

What's Happening?

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Saving Neon Signs

Once upon a time, the City of Mesa's Main Street for miles glowed at night from gas-lit tubes on signs advertising motels, flower shops, restaurants and auto service centers, to name a few. The City took a step forward recently when a team of professionals—engineers, crane operators, preservationists—worked all day in the hot sun to gently remove and store Sally's Fabrics neon sign for reuse in the future. This is just one of several planned projects for our neon signs and melds beautifully with the Federal Pass-Through grant the city just received from the State Historic Preservation Office. Entitled "Illuminating Mesa's History: City of Mesa Historic and Endangered Neon Sign Survey," the grant will enable a complete and thorough research study and survey to be completed as well as individual survey forms created for each sign and its condition.

There is now a new neon sign page on the City's website: <http://www.mesaaz.gov/residents/historic-preservation/endangered/neon>. There you will find a video made about the day Sally's Fabrics sign was saved as well as information on how neon signs are made and how we can save historic signs.



Historic Downtown Improvements

In keeping with the City's Facade Improvement Program and its colonnade removal, Mesa's Historic Preservation Office (HPO) is also focused on the historic downtown. First of all, the City recently received a Federal Pass-Through grant, entitled "Preserving Historic Downtown Mesa: Retaining History in a Transit Oriented Development (TOD)," from the State Historic Preservation Office. The focus will be a National Register nomination package, complete with updated survey forms. The HPO hope to work with property owners to establish a local historic district zoning overlay. The HPO also will be working closely with building owners to restore and preserve their structures as changes from Light Rail and the colonnade removal occur. This involves using technical skills, such as mortar analysis to help save the original brick when stucco is removed or advising on window repair, all to help retain the original character and integrity as the downtown is transformed.



Mesa's Historic Preservation Annual Report

Every year the City's efforts to preserve its history is documented. The most recent annual report can be found at: <http://www.mesaaz.gov/residents/historic-preservation>; the link to the PDF is in the third paragraph. Historic Preservation has been very busy this past year and the momentum continues!

Sidewalk Stamps

Have you ever noticed those little stamps periodically placed in sidewalks? Contractors put them there to mark their work and the year it took place. Many of Mesa's historic neighborhoods are dotted with these stamps. Some of the oldest date from the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a program created in 1935 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. A resident of West-Side Clark recently asked if they could be saved. This was an important request as many of these stamps define the age of the neighborhood they are in. Working closely with the City's Transportation Department, all stamps marked "WPA" or at least 50 years of age will now be saved when sidewalks need to be repaired or replaced.

