

1.0 INTRODUCTION

What are Historic Districts and Why are they Important?

An important part of what makes Riverside a special place to live is its abundance of historic resources. Preservation of these resources fosters civic and neighborhood pride and forms the basis for maintaining community character. With this understanding, the City of Riverside has an active historic preservation program that calls for the identification and protection of these resources.

The City recognizes four levels of local designation of historic resources. These include *Cultural Heritage Landmarks*, *Structures of Merit*, *Historic Districts*, and *Neighborhood Conservation Areas*. The Cultural Heritage Landmark designation is the highest level of historic recognition offered by the City. Structure of Merit is a lower, but still important level of historic resource. Groups of historic resources at the highest level can be recognized as a Historic District. Historic neighborhoods at a slightly lower level of significance can be designated as Neighborhood Conservation Areas.

These design guidelines are intended to apply to Historic Districts, although the principles have application to Landmarks, Structures of Merit, and Neighborhood Conservation Areas. Historic Districts are designated by the City Council upon recommendation by the Cultural Heritage Board. The district designation process allows citizens to take part in deciding the future of their neighborhoods.

In accordance with Riverside's Cultural Resources Ordinance (Title 20), *a Historic District is a geographically defined area within Riverside that has a significant concentration of historic resources that represent themes important in local history*. An area may be distinct for the quality of architecture as well as for the story it tells about Riverside's growth and development. Historic Districts typically include both *contributing* and *non-contributing* buildings. Contributing buildings are those that are significant within the defined Historic District themes. Non-contributing buildings are generally those that have been significantly altered or are of a more recent construction date and do not reflect the historic theme(s) of the District.

Designating a Historic District means more than preserving architecture. Districts give a tangible link to the past – a way to bring meaning to history and people's place in the community. District designation also encourages the rehabilitation and maintenance of properties and can serve as a marketing tool to attract visitors, tourists, and new residents.

1.2 Historic District Designation Criteria

A geographic area may be designated as an historic district by the City Council upon recommendation of the Board if it:

- Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history; or
- Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history; or
- Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or
- Represents the work of notable builders, designers, or architects; or
- Has a unique location or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood community or of the city; or

Embodies a collections of elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship that represent a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation; or
Reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associate with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation odes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning; or
Conveys a sense of historical and architectural cohesiveness through its design, setting, materials, workmanship, or association.

Period of Significance:

All historic districts have a *period of significance*. That is the time during which the district gained significance according to the criteria discussed above. The period of significance is typically a span of years relating to construction dates for the architectural styles represented. Properties outside of the period of significance are considered non-contributors to a district.

Integrity

In addition to meeting one or more of the above criteria of significance, a property must also possess *integrity*. Integrity means that a property retains the physical characteristics it possessed during the period of significance. Integrity generally includes location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Properties that do not retain sufficient integrity are considered non-contributors to a district.

1.3 Riverside's Historic Districts

The City of Riverside has nine (9) designated Historic Districts representing a variety of architectural styles, historical themes, and development patterns (Figure 1). Although some of the districts include commercial properties, these design guidelines relate specifically to residential properties. The guidelines were developed for use in conjunction with the *Downtown Specific Plan* (2002) and *Rehab Riverside Right* (1998), both published by the City of Riverside and available from the Planning Department.

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