
CHAPTER 3

POLICY FRAMEWORK AND

ADMINISTRATION

These design guidelines are part of an overall framework of law and policy the City of Riverside uses to help assure the protection of its cultural heritage. The basic documents that affect historic preservation include the General Plan, Zoning Code, Specific Plans, Cultural Resources Ordinance, and these Design Guidelines. The administration of these laws and policies is the responsibility of the Planning Department staff, Cultural Heritage Board, and the City Council. This section provides an overview of these documents and the means by which they are administered.

3.1 GENERAL PLAN

Every city in the State of California is required to have a general plan. The general plan provides the vision for a community's future development through goals, policies and maps that address future land uses, roadways, housing needs, open space issues, schools, libraries, and the like. The City of Riverside's General Plan also includes a section on historic preservation in the Community Enhancement element of the plan. Here, the plan sets out basic goals and policies with regard to the documentation, recognition, preservation, and restoration of the City's cultural heritage.

3.2 ZONING CODE (TITLE 19 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE)

The City's Zoning Code specifies where various land uses can occur and stipulates the development standards that apply within each land use zone. While historic preservation is not its primary purpose, it does address preservation matters in a number of ways. For example, it makes special provisions to allow the adaptive reuse of historic residential structures for commercial and office uses and it contains special setback standards that allow new construction in established neighborhoods to reflect the character of the neighborhood regardless of the underlying zone requirements.

3.3 SPECIFIC PLANS

Specific plans are a hybrid of zoning and general plan. A specific plan establishes special land use categories, development standards, and design guidelines for areas having a character distinct from other parts of the city. Riverside has a number of specific plans, some which apply to newly developing areas with few or no historic resources, and others which apply to existing areas with many historic resources. The Market Place Specific Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan are two plans with very strong historic references; they include multiple standards and land use considerations intended to further the historic preservation needs of

these areas. A specific plan supersedes the Zoning Code and General Plan with regard to subjects it addresses that overlap these documents.

3.4 CULTURAL RESOURCES ORDINANCE (TITLE 20 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE)

The Cultural Resources Ordinance is the primary body of local laws relating to historic preservation. Title 20 establishes the authority for preservation, the composition of its Cultural Heritage Board, criteria for evaluating work affecting a historic resource, and standards for determining what is eligible for historic designation.

3.5 HEALTH AND SANITATION (TITLE 6.0 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE)

While Title 20 includes a “Duty to Maintain” section for cultural resources, property maintenance is also addressed in the Health and Sanitation section of the Municipal Code. Specifically, this code relates to the appropriate maintenance of building exteriors, landscaping, yards, and alleys, all of which are critical to the overall integrity of historic districts.

3.6 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines bridge the gap between policy and legal documents noted above in the review of new development or alterations to historic resources. The General Plan provides a broad policy base for setting the direction of City actions, but it does not provide direct design guidance or regulations. Title 19 and the City’s specific plans provide more detailed standards for development affecting historic properties, however, they are often fairly generic in nature and not intended to comprehensively address historic issues. Title 20 provides a comprehensive set of review criteria and is specifically focused upon historic preservation; however, it does not deal with a multitude of more detailed design issues that can have a strong impact on the success of a historic preservation effort. Design guidelines are intended to address these kinds of issues. Examples include the appropriateness of additions, materials, colors, site improvements, landscaping, signing, and the like. Design guidelines can also be customized to address the specific character of an individual Historic District, including the unique wishes of district residents. It is important to understand, however, that *Design guidelines are not mandatory; rather they are advisory.* While this flexibility can be misused to rationalize inappropriate design, when applied as intended, it can be used to assure high standards of historic integrity while allowing for creative solutions for individual design problems.

3.7 ADMINISTRATION

The administration of these guidelines involves the City staff, Cultural Heritage Board, and City Council. The City staff uses these guidelines as one tool in the evaluation of new construction or an alteration in a Historic District. Other tools it uses include the General Plan, Zoning Code (Title 19), Cultural Resources Code (Title 20), and other applicable laws and guidelines. As noted above, these guidelines provide a higher level of detailed guidance

in design evaluation and allow the individual character of each Historic District to be considered in the review process.

Minor additions and alterations can be reviewed at a staff level and are referred to as *Administrative reviews*. These include re-roofing, in-kind replacement of architectural features or elements, fences, landscaping, and other less significant changes. If the staff believes the alteration could be an issue of broader interest, it may refer the application to the Cultural Heritage Board for a more public review. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the staff's requirements, he/she may appeal the decision to the City Council.

New construction and more significant additions are subject to *Cultural Heritage Board review*. The Cultural Heritage Board is a volunteer citizen body that meets once a month to review historic preservation matters under its jurisdiction. For these cases, the staff prepares a report and makes findings and recommendations for consideration by the Board. Cultural Heritage Board decisions can be appealed to the City Council.

