



# ELEMENT

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION

## OVERVIEW



*Heritage Hall- The Stone Church*

The Historic Preservation (HP) Element is intended to guide Casa Grande's effort to protect and preserve the historic, architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources of the community. This Element builds upon the provisions set forth in HP ordinances adopted by the City Council, as well as recommendations for expansions and operations of the municipal HP program. The inclusion of an HP Element in the Casa Grande General Plan Update 2030 signifies the City's commitment to the preservation of properties and areas reflecting the community's unique heritage.

During the 20th Century, historical preservation was established as a valid public purpose. The government made strides to create and meet preservation goals. The United States Supreme Court has specifically noted the power of the government to regulate the use of private property and provide public controls over land and validate historical preservation laws as an appropriate exercise of those powers. Legislatively, Congress adopted the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which declared historical preservation to be a government priority and established the National Register of Historic Places; which recognizes historic properties of state and local significance.

Arizona adopted state legislation regarding historic preservation through use of zoning powers delegated to Arizona cities and towns. This allows local governments to establish districts of historic significance and regulate development to preserve the historical character of the designated areas. Many cities and towns, including Casa Grande, have adopted ordinances to preserve the rich history of the area.



*Evergreen District Historic Residence*



Johnson's Grocery Store-- The Landmark

The HP Element of the City of Casa Grande's General Plan will provide guidance to the owners of historically significant properties, city staff, the Historic Preservation Commission and City Council regarding historic preservation matters. The importance of historic preservation as a component of growth and municipal development has been well documented. Without this consideration the preservation of the community's historical identity and character can be negatively impacted or lost by new development. Accordingly, this plan lists recommendations to help reduce these losses by monitoring historic resources, assisting owners in understanding options, and providing incentives for preservation.

### ***HISTORIC RESOURCE POPULATION***

The historic resource population of Casa Grande is associated with five distinct periods of development:

- Settlement.
- Transition from a railroad camp to mining and distribution center.
- Early 20th Century economic diversification.
- Depression/New Deal years.
- Post WWII growth.

Residences are the primary property classification associated with the aforementioned periods of development. The oldest homes are most often associated with early settlers and later prominent business leaders and their families. Other houses are considered architecturally significant for their representation of popular architectural styles. Some residences are significant for adobe, masonry construction and local craftsmanship. Other historic property types include public, institutional, and commercial buildings which were typically erected as part of a community's historic development.

Only a small proportion of the community's extant historic buildings were built before the Depression. The number of buildings constructed doubled during the 1930s and WWII. The post WWII period saw an explosion of building that continued into the mid-1960s. In the 1970s, with the advent of master-planned communities, the level of residential construction increased significantly. Home construction accelerated again in the 2000-2010 timeframe with approximately half of the current housing stock constructed during that decade.

Designation of historic properties by the City have been limited to only buildings from the early 20th century. The threats to the designated historic properties are very similar to other communities of Arizona and the West. Economic considerations are the most common threat. Historic buildings downtown are threatened by redevelopment pressures. The need and cost for functional upgrades to maintain viable uses affect decisions about preservation. Changes in societal expectations and popular tastes also come into play. Today's families want larger houses with more amenities than provided in earlier periods. Often small historic homes sit on relatively large lots making them targets for "teardowns." The historic core of most cities, including Casa Grande, is the home of the community's governmental and institutional leadership. The appearance and economic health of the historic core is perceived as a direct reflection on that leadership. When vacant, under-used or poorly maintained historic buildings exist, political support for their preservation can be swayed to use other approaches for protecting the community's economic health and viability. The most critical threat to the historic resources in Casa Grande is the lack of awareness and appreciation of their significance by the larger population. This is a phenomenon affecting many Arizona cities due to significant amount of immigration from other parts of the country and annual turnover of residents.

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF CASA GRANDE'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

Two buildings in Casa Grande were listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in the late 1970s. The Casa Grande Stone Church was registered in 1978 and the Woman's Club Building in 1979. A survey was undertaken in the early 1980s and a Multiple Resource Inventory Area list was compiled. From this list, 26 properties were nominated to the NRHP during 1985 and 1986 by the Casa Grande Historical Society and local volunteers. After the formation of the Historic Preservation Program, the City became a partner in further efforts to survey and designate properties on the NRHP. In 2002, 21 additional properties were added to the NRHP through a Multiple Property Submission.

The demolition of the Central Elementary School was a catalyst for galvanizing community and political support for the formulation of a municipal historic preservation organization. In August of 1991 the Mayor and Council passed and adopted Resolution 1940 which established the Casa Grande Historic Preservation Commission and a set of historic preservation regulations.



*Historic Storefront*



*Evergreen District Historic Residence*

## **LOCAL DESIGNATION ACTIVITIES**

Following the enactment of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City locally designated those properties that were listed on the NRHP. These individually significant properties date primarily from the first decades of the 20th century. In 2002 a survey was conducted of the Evergreen addition to Casa Grande, resulting in the local designation of a historic district. This act expanded the City's recognition of historic properties during the Depression and the early post World War II (WWII) era.

## **REVIEW PROCEDURES**

The Historic Preservation Commission has only conducted a limited number of hearings for Certificates of Appropriateness because most of the work either qualifies as routine maintenance or involves work not requiring a building permit such as window replacement or re-roofing. However, to assist in the review process, the HP Commission has proactively sponsored the preparation of design guidelines for the Evergreen Historic District. The Commission has shared these guidelines with the owners of properties within the Evergreen District.

## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The effective operation of a municipal Historic Preservation Program requires recognizing, protecting and preserving the community's cultural, historical, architectural resources. However, this work cannot be done in isolation. To be successful requires an informed citizenry appreciative of Casa Grande's heritage, as well as a range of programs and projects to integrate historic preservation. Further, as a Certified Local Government, the City of Casa Grande also has a responsibility to enforce its Historic Preservation Ordinance and State legislation by:

- Designating and protecting historic and archaeological properties.
- Maintaining a qualified HP Commission.
- Surveying and maintaining a detailed inventory of its designated properties.
- Providing for adequate public participation.

Some of the Action Steps set forth in this General Plan are simple to undertake, while others will take multiple years to develop and successfully implement.

MAP FIGURE 3:22 HISTORIC DISTRICT & LANDMARK BUILDINGS

