

Chapter 44 Historic Signs

Section: 11-44-1 [Historic Signs](#)

11-44-1: Historic Signs

- A. **Purpose and Intent.** This Section provides standards and procedures for the preservation and maintenance of a sign designated as historic. The intent of this Section is to recognize the historic character of Mesa's older commercial areas through the preservation of historic signs.
- B. **Eligibility.** A sign is designated historic if it meets the following criteria:
1. The sign has been in continuous existence, at its present location, for not less than fifty (50) years and the appearance of the sign has remained substantially the same during this time-period;
 2. The sign is of exemplary technology, craftsmanship, and design for the period in which it was constructed;
 3. The sign uses historic sign materials from the time-period of the signs construction, and has retained those materials;
 4. The sign uses some form of exposed neon lighting, electrified glass tubes, bulbs that contain rarefied neon, or another means of illumination for the time-period in which the sign was established; and
 5. The sign is unique in that it demonstrates extraordinary aesthetic quality, creativity, or innovation.
- C. **Application Requirements.** Only the sign owner may initiate a request for historic sign designation. The sign owner must apply, to the office of the Planning Division, in accordance with the application procedures in Chapter 67 of the Zoning Ordinance except that a Citizen Participation Plan is not required. In addition to the requirements in Chapter 67, the application must include the following:
1. A project narrative that includes:
 - a. The original construction date and location of the sign;
 - b. Statements and evidence of the height, size, location, materials and design of the sign, such as photographs, original drawings, approved permits, site plans, or other materials; and
 - c. Any other document(s) necessary to show the sign meets the eligibility requirements in Sub-section B.
 2. A restoration and maintenance plan demonstrating:
 - a. The sign is in operational order, or if the sign is not in operational order, identify the steps and the time frame necessary to make the sign operational within one-hundred and eighty (180) days. Include a list of any parts and materials that need to be replaced;
 - b. The sign is structurally sound, or if the sign is not structurally sound, outline the steps and the time frame necessary to make the sign structurally sound. Explain

the process that will be used to ensure the sign maintains its historic character;
and

- c. Historic materials are available to continue maintenance of the sign and structure in its historic character.

D. **Review Procedures.** The Historic Preservation Officer (HPO) determines whether an application is complete. When an application is determined complete, a hearing is scheduled before the Hearing Preservation Board. The Historic Preservation Board will conduct a public hearing and render a decision. The Historic Preservation Board may approve the designation of a historic sign if the sign satisfies the review criteria in Sub-section E. The Historic Preservation Board may impose reasonable conditions to achieve the review criteria in Sub-section E, including but not limited to a statement of the character defining elements that must be maintained.

E. **Review Criteria.** When determining whether a sign is historic, the Historic Preservation Board must find that the sign(s) satisfies the following criteria:

1. The sign has been at its present location for not less than fifty (50) years.
2. The sign uses exemplary technology, craftsmanship, or design for the time-period in which it was constructed.
3. The sign uses historic materials for the time-period it was constructed and the availability of materials to maintain the historic character of the sign.
4. If the sign is not operational, the ability to restore the sign within one-hundred eighty (180) days.
5. If the sign uses exposed neon lighting, electrified glass tubes, bulbs that contain rarefied neon, or another means of illumination, it shall be from the time-period in which it was constructed.
6. The sign has a unique design that demonstrates aesthetic quality, creativity, or innovation.

F. **Public Notice.** Notice of the public hearing of the Historic Preservation Board shall be mailed at least fifteen (15) days before the scheduled hearing date by first class mail to all owners of property located within three-hundred (300) feet of the exterior boundary of the property that contains the proposed historic sign, based on the last assessment. The contents of the notice shall comply with 11-67-5-C of the Zoning Ordinance.

G. **Revocation of Historic Sign Designation.** The Historic Preservation Officer may revoke a historic sign designation if the sign is not maintained, modified, or repaired consistent with the Historic Preservation Board's findings and conditions of approval. A sign owner may appeal the Historic Preservation Officer's decision to the Historic Preservation Board, as provided in Chapter 77 of the Zoning Ordinance.

- H. **Restoration, Maintenance and Repair.** The owner of a historic sign must restore, maintain, and repair the sign in accordance with this Section.
1. **Restoration.** Approval of a historic sign is subject to the sign being operational and restored consistent with the conditions approved by the Historic Preservation Board within one-hundred and eighty (180) days of the Board's approval. If a sign is not restored consistent with the conditions approved by the Board or is not operational within one-hundred and eighty (180) days of the Board's approval, the historic sign designation is automatically revoked. The owner of the historic sign can appeal this decision to the Historic Preservation Board as provided in Chapter 77.
 2. **Maintenance.** Ordinary maintenance and repair of the historic sign is permitted, provided the maintenance does not change the material or design of the sign or alter the sign's character defining elements as per the Historic Preservation Board's approval.
 3. **Repair.** If a historic sign is damaged or partially destroyed, the historic sign must either be removed, or restored or rebuilt consistent with the character defining elements of the Historic Preservation Board's approval.
 4. **Modifications.** The Historic Preservation Officer may approve modifications to a historic sign that are consistent with the original findings and conditions approved by the Historic Preservation Board. The owner of the historic sign can appeal the Historic Preservation Office's decision to the Historic Preservation Board as provided in Chapter 77.
- I. **Demolition Permits.** Prior to demolition of a designated historic sign, the consideration of a demolition permit, in accordance with the provisions in Sections 11-74-4-B-1, 11-74-4-B-2, and 11-74-4-C of the Zoning Ordinance, is required.
- J. **Effect of Designation.** When a sign is designated as a historic sign and restored to its historic function and appearance:
1. The sign is exempt from the height and size requirements of this Sign Ordinance;
 2. The sign is considered legal, conforming and the property on which the sign is located may redevelop without having to bring the historic sign into conformance with this Sign Ordinance; and,
 3. The amount of sign area contained in the historic sign does not count toward the sign area or height allowed on the property.