



# CITY OF ARCADIA

# CITYWIDE HISTORIC RESOURCES

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### 1. What is a historic resources survey?

A historic resources survey is a process of systematically identifying, researching and documenting properties that reflect important themes in the city's growth and development such as architecture, city planning, social history, ethnic heritage, politics, industry, transportation, commerce, entertainment and others. Historic resources include buildings, structures, objects, cultural landscapes, natural features and groupings of resources or areas known as potential historic districts.

### 2. What is the new process if I want to demolish my house?

The process for demolition under the Historic Preservation Ordinance will not change. Any building 50 years old or older shall be subject to the procedures set forth in the City's Development Code. The City requires that a qualified Architectural Historian or Historian, at the expense of the property owner, shall conduct an assessment and complete a full evaluation of the structure(s) and/or site and determine if the structure and/or site has any historical significance and is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the historic resource would be evaluated to determine whether the proposed demolition or alteration would cause a “substantial adverse change” or “materially impair” the historic resource. Once this determination has been made, the type of environmental documentation needed for the proposed project can be determined.

### 3. What are the requirements to form a historic district?

The Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance proposes that at least 60 percent of properties within the district must contribute to the historic significance of the district and 75 percent of property owners within the district need to consent to the designation.

**4. What is the difference between a “contributor” and a “non-contributor” in a historic district?**

**Contributor** – A Contributor means any building, structure, object, site, sign, or planning features within a historic district that contributes to the district’s historic, cultural, or architectural significance.

**Non-Contributor** – A Non-Contributor means any building, structure, object, site, sign, or planning features within a historic district that does not meet the criteria for eligibility, does not contribute to the district’s historic, cultural, or architectural significance, and is therefore not a historic resource. If a property is a “non-contributor” then it is not subject to the regulations or processes under the new Historic Preservation Ordinance, but may be subject to design review.

**5. If my property is located in a designated Home Owners Association, what is the process for altering my house?**

The Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance proposes a process for properties that are either located within a designated historic district, or within a potential historic district that has not yet been designated, or is a designated historic resource. Certain alterations will require a Certificate of Appropriateness and in those cases, the designated Home Owners Association will forward a recommendation on the design either to the Planning Commission or City Staff before an action is taken on the project.

**6. What is the Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program?**

The Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program allows qualifying property owners to receive a potential property tax reduction and use the savings to help rehabilitate, restore, and maintain their buildings. Although it is a statewide program, the Mills Act is administered and implemented by local governments. The City of Arcadia is considering implementing a Mills Act program, in which owners of designated historic properties (individually designated and contributors to designated historic districts) will be eligible to participate. The City shall determine on an annual basis how many contracts it will accept and may set a financial cap on the program.

**7. How is a historic resources survey conducted? How are the resources evaluated?**

A survey typically begins with background research on a property, area or district to provide a basis to evaluate significance. Survey teams then conduct field inspections in order to identify the resource’s architectural, physical, and visual qualities and characteristics; and assess the impacts or alterations. The data entered into the Property Database includes address/location, year built, architectural style, architect on record (when known), alterations, summary statement of significance, and California Historical Resource Status Code(s). California Register criteria were utilized for this effort since Arcadia does not have local eligibility criteria or guidelines. All evaluations were completed from the public right-of-way by vehicle or on foot.

**8. Do surveyed resources automatically become designated?**

No. Although surveys identify and evaluate resources that may be eligible for designation, no actual designation results directly from survey activity.

**9. How will survey information be recorded?**

Information about properties and districts will be recorded in a customized database, which includes all fields typically found in California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 series forms. If a complete set of DPR form is required (e.g. demolition), the evaluator shall then submit the completed DPR forms to the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at the California State University of Fullerton where they keep all the historical resources within Los Angeles County in compliance with California Historical Resource Information System standards.

## **10. What type of information will be in the survey database?**

The database will include various types of information on individual properties and potential historic districts relating to construction and ownership history, architecture, significance, and relevant evaluation criteria. The database will also include maps.

## **11. Can resources that are less than 50 years old be considered "historic?"**

A potential resource that is less than 50 years old may not be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places unless it is of "exceptional importance." Such a resource may be considered eligible for the California Register if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand and gain a scholarly perspective on its historical significance.

## **12. What does it mean if my building is identified?**

If your building is identified and recorded as part of the survey it means that the City's consultant, ARG, found it eligible for listing in the California Register. Identification in the survey is not the same as designation. Survey activity will not directly result in designation. Because the City of Arcadia does not currently have a local preservation ordinance establishing local eligibility criteria, ARG used an adaptation of the California Register criteria in the evaluation of potential local eligibility.

## **13. What if I don't want my property to be surveyed?**

Approximately 16,800 parcels within the city limits were evaluated by the survey team, with the exception of those containing built resources that post-date 1970. The survey is a way of gathering information on properties within Arcadia that may meet eligibility requirements for listing on the California Register. The scope of the survey included all built resources within Arcadia's city limits that were constructed from the community's initial development period through 1970. The end date of 1970 was mutually decided upon by ARG and City Staff, and ensured that the survey could sufficiently capture potentially-eligible resources that are 46 years of age or older. All property types, residential, commercial and institutional were included in the project scope. Also, all properties that were previously identified in a similar 2002 survey were re-evaluated by the consultants as part of this project.

## **14. What is a historic context statement?**

A historic context statement is a written document that provides the framework for evaluating a property for historic significance and integrity. Developed using the National Register Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) approach, the historic context statement provides an in-depth narrative account of the city's development history as reflected by its built environment. It is not intended to be a comprehensive history.

For additional information, including announcements of any future meetings, please visit the City's website on Historic Preservation at [www.ArcadiaCA.gov/historicpreservation](http://www.ArcadiaCA.gov/historicpreservation).

## **CONTACT US**

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