

HISTORICAL PROPERTIES PRESERVATION PLAN

7.1 Major Planning & Design Issues

The Virgin River Valley is as much of a major historic significance to Southern Nevada as it was to the westward pioneer movement. Farming in the area dates back more than 100 years, and the permanent settlement will celebrate its centennial birthday in 1994. Success of agricultural development in and near Mesquite is the result of the Virgin River and the innovative canal system engineered by early farmers to water their crops.

Many of the early home sites in the city have been destroyed or have deteriorated beyond reasonable value. There are, however, some residences which have been maintained and are in current use, which can be acquired, restored and preserved for posterity.

Other than the early homes, the old library, which currently houses the Desert Valley Museum, is the most significant traditional historic community structure.

South of the Virgin River lies the remains of wagon trails used by earlier settlers pioneering the west. Only wagon ruts remain. Little is known about the pioneers' campsites near the river, or the community characteristics of the various Indian tribes who lived in the region along the river earlier.

Also lost are any traces of the early orchards, vineyards and cotton fields which provided economic support, food and sustenance for the settlers in Mesquite. Major land holdings which were farmed have been broken-up and sold off in smaller parcels for either alfalfa production or for development. Livestock, once a major element of the agricultural community, has significantly dwindled.

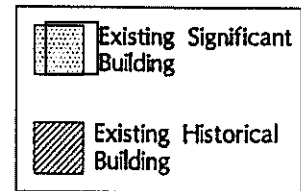
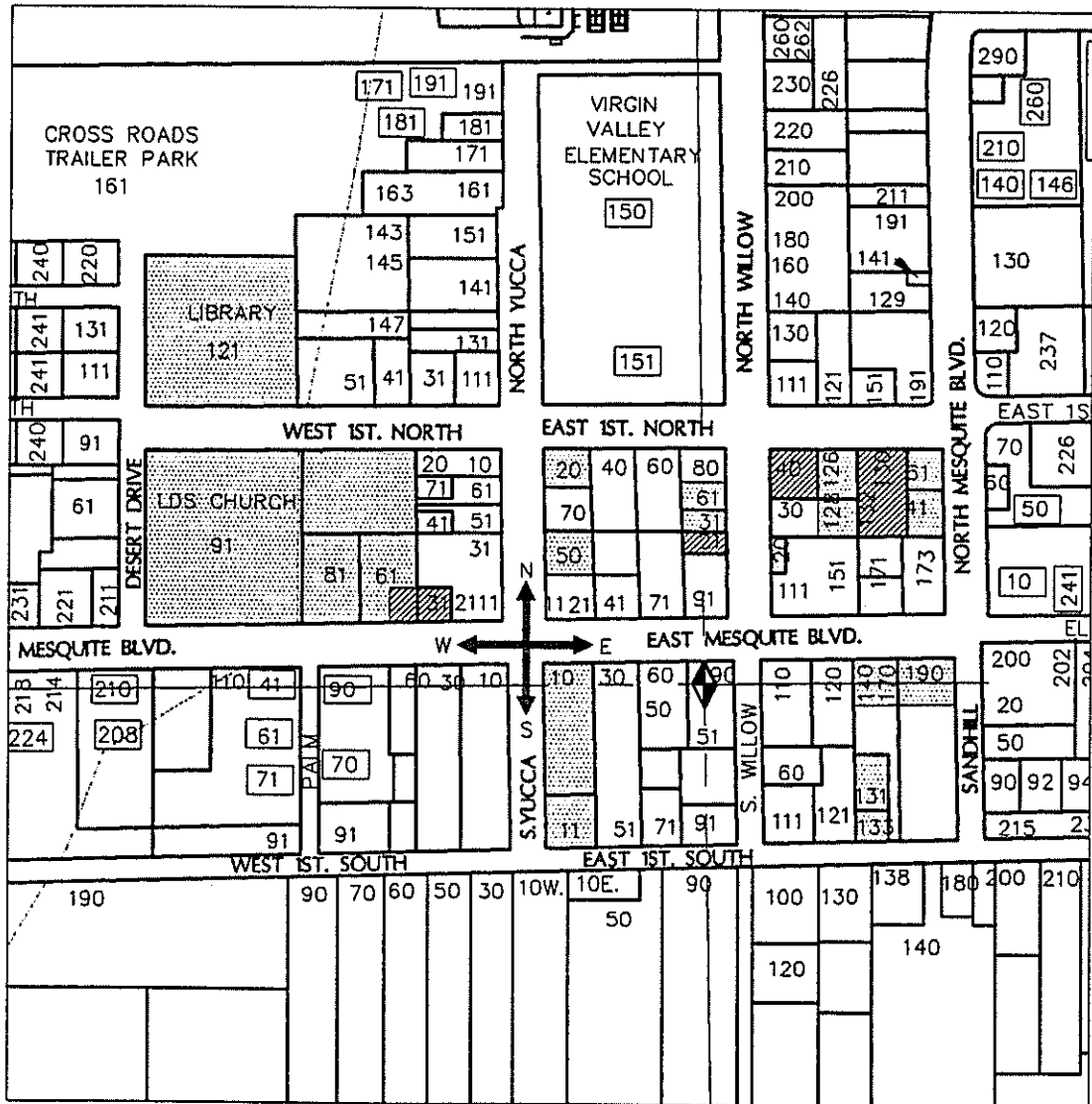
Design Context

For Mesquite to retain its small town and historic rural character, much attention must be given to restoring and re-building its historic linkages to its past.

Plate 7-1.1 indicates the various locations of historic structures and other significant older structures in town. The historic structures should be acquired by the City, restored to their original condition and be incorporated into the City's museum program or used to house one of the community's non-profit cultural societies.

MESQUITE MASTER PLAN

Plate 7-11



Historical Buildings of Downtown Mesquite



Where the facilities can be incorporated into the museum program, they can be used to exhibit – in a better environment and frame of reference – much of the existing collection housed at the Desert Valley Museum. The main exhibit area of the existing museum can be restored to its original configuration of the “library”.

Other older significant structures can be acquired for public purposes and used in a similar fashion; where they are of value to private sector purposes, they should be restored and continue to be used for housing or for small business office.

Where and whenever possible, older significant structures along Mesquite Boulevard should be saved and restored. These properties provide extremely important linkages back to Mesquite’s earlier days and establish a context and scale for future development.

The irrigation canal is another extremely important historic feature of the community that can be a continued cultural benefit to the public. Its future role can be expanded to irrigate parks, open space corridors, provide tree groves and gardens throughout the City and supply water displays, fountains and ponds in public spaces.

To insure that the City’s linkage to its agricultural past is preserved, designated parcels of existing land zoned for agricultural purposes can be acquired and place in a permanent public trust. These lands can be used in conjunction with public education programs or leased for gardens. Other areas can be re-planted as orchards and/or tree farms to be used for the community’s street-tree program.

Early agricultural activity along the river was supported by livestock, and while public supported livestock programs may not be politically correct – in terms of historic preservation – the City can help preserve the important historic element. Land areas reserved for rural and agricultural estates – which allows for livestock – can be developed as a tool to continue support.

Promotion of equestrian activity throughout the City is another way to help preserve the community’s agricultural connection with its past. Open space corridors which incorporate equestrian trails allow riders to navigate through the City to the range areas all around Mesquite. A rodeo arena, as a means to teach ranching and equestrian skills to younger generations of Nevadans provides for a historic and cultural linkage as well as athletic and recreational activity.

As part of the community’s historic and cultural program, a series of special events can be scheduled as annual activities to celebrate Mesquite’s heritage. Possible new programs can include agricultural and ranching competitions for



men and women, household competitions and bake-offs, extended trail rides, pioneering re-creations and Indian events.

As an additional means of linking the city with its past and its cultural heritage, a series of “Monuments and Memorials” are master planned to be constructed throughout the community. Locations for these “Monuments and Memorials” are indicated on **Plates 4-1.1** and **4-1.2**. Refer to Chapter 4, Community Design Element. Subjects for these “Monuments and Memorials” include the following:

- A tribute to the Anasazi and Paiute Indian Tribes that created the first settlements along the Virgin River.
- A tribute to the first Mormon settlers, who came to the Virgin River area in 1877, the Bunker family, Utley family, Burger family, Branch family, Larson family, Robbins family, and Hanson family.
- A tribute to the Dudley Leavitt family, his 5 wives and 51 children who re-settled Mesquite in 1887.
- Tributes to the Mormon Pioneer families who permanently settled Mesquite in 1894.
 - The Abbott family
 - The Hardy family
 - The Neagle family
 - The Waite family
- A tribute to the Virgin River.
- A tribute to the Canal System.
- A tribute to the Veterans of Mesquite who served their country in the face of war.
- A tribute to the citizens of Mesquite and the City Council who brought into fruition incorporation of the City and community’s first master plan, and have provided civic leadership and notable contributions to good government.
- Pioneering with Pride (Gateways to Town)
- Nevada, My Own Nevada, I Love You
- Alfalfa (Heritage Park)



- Orchards (Heritage Park)

Other appropriate subjects for "Monuments and Memorials" should be added to this list as the community grows and expands, and others significantly contribute to the community's stature.

7.2 Environment and Resources

Major components of the Historic Preservation Plan evolve from policies set by Council. These policies are carried out through the City manager, and through the various departments of city government. Master planning, planning, zoning and construction issues can be channeled through a citizen advisory review board, established by the Council, for planning, citizen input and recommendations.

Historic preservation programs and related community based cultural activities can also be administered by local non-profit organizations through grants by the City for programs and services to the public.

A government / public sector partnership can be effectively used to provide programs and services to the community at lower costs.

There are a number of existing sites containing historic and significant structures located near the proposed Civic Center. The City can acquire these properties through a number of means including extended payment / purchase. This is where a property may be purchased by the City at current value and the seller maintains occupancy of the property for a stipulated term. Payments to the owner minus a rent factor or tax credit are paid monthly throughout the term of the purchase agreement by the City until the property is clear.

Public funds will also be required to support restoration construction, and acquisition and development of other historic and cultural elements of the plan; however, much can be accomplished through public / private partnerships.

It will be the role of local historical and cultural organizations to help the Council establish priorities for funding improvements for the annual Goals and Objectives sessions.



7.3 THE PLAN

D. Historical Properties Preservation

Goal:

- 1. Preserve all remaining historic sites and resources and enhance the community's foundations, including early Indian and Anasazi influences.**

Objectives:

D-1.1 Acquire and restore early home sites, archaeological resources and historic structures for public ownership for future generations.

D-1.2 Develop a historic preservation plan and ordinance which encourages retention and re-use of buildings of historic value in Mesquite.

D-1.3 Restore and expand the community's museum to provide a more effective exhibit of the city's history.

D-1.4 Protect the Virgin River and it's riparian habit including the agriculture canals as a permanent historic community and cultural resource.

D-1.5 Provide monuments respecting early Indian cultures and pioneers who settled along the Virgin River corridor.

Strategies:

1. Assist the Historic Society and other organizations in the acquisition, restoration, and enhancement of early community landmarks including archaeological sites.
2. Assist the Historic Society and other organization in the preparation and installation of a preservation plan and associated ordinances.
2. Assist the Historic Society and other organizations in the funding of monuments designating historic events and those individuals who were instrumental in founding Mesquite.



7.4 Guidelines

Guidelines for the Historical Properties Preservation Plan Element address the following planning and design issues as each relates to community development and construction:

- Design Relationships
- Continued Use
- Public Safety

Design Relationships

1. Design for development in the community shall be respectful of the historic and cultural context of the City. Development shall be respectful of the existing scale of historic structures and site planning relationships, including the use of building materials, construction details, setbacks and landscaping.
2. Design for development adjacent to and nearby historic structures shall be respectful of the values these buildings represent as treasures of the community-at-large; and new development shall reinforce and support the historic property's presence.

Continued Use

1. Redevelopment of sites containing structures which have been designated "significant" in terms of historic characteristics shall retain the existing design and site planning character of the site.

Additions or modifications to these structures are acceptable as long as the additions or modifications add to the historic value of the property.

Public Safety

1. Where older significant structures are upgraded to be used for new purposes, the facilities should be brought into conformance with local life-safety and building codes or protected by fully automatic fire sprinkler systems.