



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE AND REGISTER UPDATE

Historic preservation of the built environment is at the heart of creating vibrant and meaningful places. Mountain View's historic buildings and sites represent the community's unique history and physical development over time. They contribute to a sense of place and identity for local residents. While future development patterns and lifestyles no doubt will change, the city's historic built environment maintains a dependable, expressive connection to its past. Historic preservation does not simply mean keeping old buildings exactly as they were in the past. Rather, contemporary preservation practice includes a dynamic set of considerations—cultural, economic, environmental—that recognize the numerous benefits that come with maintaining and rehabilitating historic buildings for future generations.

The City of Mountain View's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance) includes procedures for designating properties as historic resources on the local Register of Historic Resources (Register) and removing properties from the Register, procedures for approval of modifications to historic resources, and incentives to encourage the preservation of historic resources. These provisions were adopted in 2004 along with a Register of Historic Resources. There are currently 48 properties on the Register.

The City of Mountain View Historic Preservation Ordinance and Register Update is necessary for the following reasons:

- Updates to the Ordinance and Register are occasionally necessary as the periods of historic significance and community goals pertaining to historic preservation change over time.
- Updating the Register will streamline development review by reducing the need for historic studies on many projects.
- Updating the Ordinance provides the opportunity to establish a process and criteria for the designation of local historic districts, which is not currently included in the Ordinance.
- The City has identified additional areas of clarification which would improve the Ordinance and its role in development review.

The City of Mountain View Planning Department is working with Page & Turnbull, an award-winning historic preservation planning and architecture firm with offices in San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles, and Sacramento. The City of Mountain View Historic Preservation Ordinance and Register Update includes five tasks with the goal of updating the city's Register of Historic Resources:

1. Historic Preservation Ordinance Update
2. Historic Context Statement
3. Citywide Historic Resources Survey



4. Register of Historic Resources Update
5. Nomination of select Castro Street properties to the National Register

In addition, the City will study up to eight commercial buildings on Castro Street for possible nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The following Frequently Asked Questions pertain to each of the five tasks listed above.

1. HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE

Why does the Historic Preservation Ordinance require an update?

As described in the introduction, an update to the [Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) will provide the opportunity to establish a process and criteria for the designation of local historic districts, which is not currently included in the Ordinance, and will address additional areas of clarification which would improve the Ordinance and its role in the City's development review process. The updated Ordinance will provide the legal framework for recognizing, protecting, and managing changes to the City of Mountain View's historic resources.

How will the Historic Preservation Ordinance Framework be updated?

The City of Mountain View's historic preservation consultant, Page & Turnbull, will utilize information gathered from public outreach, as well as knowledge of best practices, current laws, and ordinances in comparable cities, to draft an updated historic preservation ordinance framework. Updates will include criteria and processes for designating local historic districts and implementing historic preservation incentives, and it may include clarifications and updates to existing language and processes.

When will the Historic Preservation Ordinance Framework Update be completed?

The Historic Preservation Ordinance Framework Update is scheduled to be prepared from Fall 2022 to Summer 2023. Final review and adoption of the Historic Preservation Ordinance Framework Update by the Environmental Planning Commission and City Council is anticipated to occur in Fall 2023.

How can you get involved?

A draft of the Historic Preservation Ordinance Framework will be available for public review and comment in Spring 2023. You can also attend Community Workshops scheduled for Late Summer 2022 and Spring 2023.

2. HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

What is a Historic Context Statement?

A Historic Context Statement (HCS) is a specialized historic study. It focuses on the physical development of an area over time—how and why it developed, what types of properties characterized that development, and whether or not they may be historically significant. An HCS identifies significant themes, patterns, and property types, so that interested parties can



recognize the forces that shaped the built environment of Mountain View. This provides a framework that helps in the identification, evaluation, and treatment of historic properties.

What is the purpose of a Historic Context Statement?

The Historic Context Statement:

- Helps the community to better understand historic properties, even in the absence of comprehensive knowledge about specific buildings
- Provides information and evaluative framework that form the basis for a citywide historic resources survey
- Supports the update of the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources
- Informs future preservation planning decisions and programs

What is not included in an Historic Context Statement?

An Historic Context Statement is a summary of the city's physical development. It is not intended to be a comprehensive community history, nor does it evaluate the significance or eligibility of individual properties to be considered historic resources.

What does historic significance and integrity mean?

The Historic Context Statement will provide an evaluation framework, which will outline the significance and integrity criteria that a property must meet in order to be considered eligible for listing on a historic register. Historic significance and integrity are two interrelated concepts that provide the foundation for identifying historic resources. A property must be significant within the context of history. Historic context themes often relate to the historic development of a community, such as commercial or industrial activities. They may relate to the occupation of a group or individual, the rise of an architectural movement, the work of a master architect, specific events or activities, or a pattern of physical development that influenced the character of a place at a particular time in history.

Historic integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance from the past through its physical characteristics. Based on guidance from the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places, historic integrity is the composite of seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Who uses the Historic Context Statement?

The Historic Context Statement may be used by anyone. It is intended to help property owners, members of the community, architects, historic resources planning consultants, city planners, and decision-making bodies such as the Environmental Planning Commission, recognize and consider protection of historic properties.

A photo or mention of my property appears in the Historic Context Statement. Does this mean it is historically significant?

Not necessarily. The photos in the Historic Context Statement are intended to support the text descriptions, or to provide examples of property types. However, just because a photo of a



building appears in the Historic Context Statement does not automatically mean that the property is an eligible historic resource.

Will the Historic Context Statement place restrictions on my property?

No, not by itself. The Historic Context Statement is an informational document that is intended to provide a framework for the citywide historic resources survey and integrate with the City's existing development review process. It will help building owners, planners, and other interested parties evaluate the potential historic significance of a property, but it does not establish any official designations, development restrictions, or other limitations.

When will the Historic Context Statement be prepared?

The Historic Context Statement is scheduled to be prepared from Fall 2022 to Summer 2023. Final review and adoption of the Historic Context Statement by the Environmental Planning Commission and City Council is anticipated in Summer 2023.

How can you get involved?

Respond to the community information survey available on the City of Mountain View's website, which will help inform the Historic Context Statement. A draft of the Historic Context Statement will be available for public review and comment in Spring 2023. You can also attend Community Workshops scheduled for Fall 2022 and Spring 2023.

City of Mountain View website: www.mountainview.gov/historic.

3. CITYWIDE HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY UPDATE

Why is a Citywide Historic Resources Survey needed?

A citywide survey of Mountain View's older buildings for historic significance was conducted in 2008, and the information prepared in that survey is now 14 years old. In addition, age-eligible properties in Mountain View (those that are at least 50 years old) have not been surveyed, though they may possess historic significance. A Citywide Historic Resources Survey, conducted according to today's best practices, will be conducted to assess all age-eligible properties and consider the potential for historic districts.

How will the Citywide Historic Resources Survey be conducted?

Mountain View's Citywide Historic Resources Survey Update will be undertaken using the previously identified list of properties, Geographic Information System (GIS) data, field observation, the Historic Context Statement, and property-specific historic research. In order for these properties to qualify as historic resources, they need to meet evaluation criteria as well as retain sufficient integrity to convey their significance today.

Page & Turnbull will undertake a two-tiered methodology for conducting the Citywide Historic Resources Survey Update. A reconnaissance-level survey will first be conducted of all age-eligible (at least 45 years old) properties, using the Historic Context Statement's evaluative criteria as the basis of evaluation. This reconnaissance-level survey will be undertaken as a street-by-street



windshield survey of approximately 10,000 age-eligible properties. The effort will identify potential historic resources and historic districts.

The second step will be to conduct an intensive-level survey of all properties documented in the 2008 survey, additional properties currently listed in the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources, Area H of the Downtown Precise Plan (six blocks including and surrounding the 100 to 300 blocks of Castro Street), and all properties identified as potentially eligible historic resources in the reconnaissance-level survey. This intensive-level survey will identify properties that may be added to or removed from the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources and properties that are individually eligible for listing in the California Register and/or National Register. The intensive-level survey will utilize the Historic Context Statement evaluation framework and will require additional property-specific historic research in some cases. The methodology for the survey and the survey results will be summarized in a Survey Report, which will be released for public review and comment in draft form.

When will the Citywide Historic Resources Survey be undertaken?

The reconnaissance-level survey is scheduled to occur in Spring 2023. The intensive-level survey is scheduled to occur in Summer and Fall 2023. Final review and adoption of the Survey Report by the Environmental Planning Commission and City Council is anticipated in Winter 2024.

How can you get involved?

Respond to the community information survey available on the City of Mountain View's website, which will help inform the Citywide Historic Resources Survey. A draft of the DPR survey forms and Survey Report will be available for public review and comment in Winter 2024. You can also attend Community Workshops scheduled for Fall 2022 and Spring 2023.

City of Mountain View website: www.mountainview.gov/historic.

4. REGISTER OF HISTORIC RESOURCES UPDATE

How will the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources be updated?

Based on the conclusions of the intensive-level phase of the Citywide Historic Resources Survey, those properties that are found eligible for designation in the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources will be brought to the Environmental Planning Commission and City Council for consideration.

How does inclusion in the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources affect my ability to remodel my property?

The Mountain View Historic Preservation Ordinance includes development review requirements for historic preservation permits, which apply to properties designated on the Register of Historic Resources.

If my property is not listed in the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources, does that mean my building is not historic? How does this affect my ability to remodel my property?



It does not necessarily mean that your property is not historic. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a state law that requires the review of “qualified historic resources” which include (a) properties listed on a local historic register, or (b) properties listed or found eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. A property may not be listed in the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources but be found eligible for listing in the California Register. One goal of the Citywide Historic Resources Survey is to identify properties that would be considered historic resources for CEQA in order to inform property owners so that they can plan appropriately for potential future remodels.

According to CEQA, all buildings constructed over 50 years ago that also possess architectural or historical significance may be considered potential historic resources, and proposed changes to these buildings may require some level of environmental review. CEQA review is a state-mandated process that, in part, determines whether a building is or is not considered a historic resource, and whether the proposed changes will have a negative impact on the resource. Interior alterations are typically not under CEQA purview, particularly in the case of private residences, unless the interiors are publicly accessible and considered historically significant. Projects that may be subject to CEQA review include proposed demolition, building relocation, and alterations that affect the exterior of a building, such as additions or replacement of materials or features.

Development projects that are designed to be sensitive to the historic character of the property may be eligible for a Categorical Exemption (Cat. Ex.), which means that no further environmental review is required. Projects that introduce a large amount of change, including demolition, could require more intensive environmental review. More information about the CEQA environmental review process as it relates to historic buildings is located at the California Office of Historic Preservation website: http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21721.

How does a finding of historic resource eligibility in the Citywide Historic Resources Survey or inclusion in the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources benefit property owners?

Properties that are identified as eligible for listing in the California Register or National Register and/or are included in the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources have the benefit of a shorter and less expensive CEQA review process because only the proposed project must be evaluated, not whether the property itself needs to be evaluated to determine if it is a historic resource.

Properties that are identified as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and that will be used for a business or other income-producing purpose may be able to apply for [Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits](#).

The City of Mountain View’s Historic Preservation Ordinance also provides a [list of incentives and benefits](#) for properties that are designated to the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources.



It is also worth noting that concern about negative economic effects is often raised when discussing historic preservation. However, many studies have shown a direct correlation between the creation of historic preservation programs and policies and a long-term increase in property values. A sampling of articles and resources on the topic are located here: <http://www.sohosandiego.org/resources/historicvalues.pdf>; <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e8e5/f6506c288db4b4b4f914037096499d7e7302.pdf>; <https://www.achp.gov/initiatives/community-revitalization-economic-benefits/area-studies>

When will the Register of Historic Resources be updated?

Consideration and adoption of an update to the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources by the Environmental Planning Commission and City Council is anticipated to occur in Winter 2024.

5. CASTRO STREET NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

What properties on Castro Street will be nominated to the National Register?

Page & Turnbull will evaluate commercial properties on Castro Street for potential listing in the National Register of Historic Resources, including eight properties that were identified by Mountain View City Council as priorities for potential listing: 124 Castro Street, 171 Castro Street, 191, Castro Street, 201 Castro Street, 194-196 Castro Street, 275 Castro Street, 292 Castro Street, and 301 Castro Street. Page & Turnbull will conduct site visits and building-specific research to determine which properties are eligible for listing in the National Register based on the background established in the Historic Context Statement. The properties that are determined to have historic significance and retain historic integrity based on National Park Service standards will be nominated to the National Register.

My Castro Street property is one of those being studied for potential designation in the National Register – How can I get involved? What if I don't want my property to be designated?

All owners of the Castro Street properties that are identified as eligible for listing in the National Register will be informed and provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft National Register nomination. Properties that are identified as eligible or are listed in the National Register and are used for a business or other income-producing purpose may be able to apply for [Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits](#). The City of Mountain View will work with property owners to discuss the benefits of designation in the National Register. However, properties cannot be designated without owner consent.

To provide additional information or historic photographs of a Castro Street commercial property, fill out the survey form on the City of Mountain View website: www.mountainview.gov/historic.

When will the select Castro Street properties be listed in the National Register?

Field and archival research will be conducted in early 2023 and a preliminary determination of eligibility for listing in the National Register will be prepared in Spring 2023. Nominations will be



prepared for review by City staff and property owners in Early Fall 2023 and will be submitted to the California Office of Historic Preservation in Late Fall 2023.