

# CITY OF ALHAMBRA

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM FAQ

### Why has the City initiated this project?

Conducting a historic resources survey is the second of three phases in the development of a potential Historic Preservation Program for the City of Alhambra. In 2022, Phase 1 of this project was completed, consisting of the preparation of a comprehensive Citywide Historic Context Statement, which outlines important events and patterns of development in the city's history (available [here](#)). Phase 2 consists of a Historic Resources Survey to identify potential properties and neighborhoods that may be eligible for historic designation. The survey is an important step that builds on the research conducted for the development of the historic context statement, provides information about the built environment in the city, and will help inform the discussion of a potential Historic Preservation Ordinance (Phase 3). Phase 3 is anticipated for kick off in early 2024 and will include community input as an important part of the process.

### What is the schedule for the project?

Phase 2 of the project was initiated in October 2022 when the City engaged with Historic Resources Group and Architectural Resources Group to conduct a Citywide Historic Resources Survey. The team has submitted recommendations for potentially eligible properties for review by City staff, the City Council, and the community. A community outreach meeting is scheduled for **September 27, 2023**. At that meeting, the survey team will review the goals and methodology for the project, provide background information on the types of properties identified as potentially eligible, and solicit input from the community. More information about the community meeting can be found [here](#). Phase 2 will be completed in Fall 2023, with Phase 3 (the development of a potential Historic Preservation Ordinance) kicking off in 2024.

### Who conducted the survey?

The City commissioned Historic Resources Group (HRG) and Architectural Resources Group (ARG) to complete the Historic Resources Survey. All members of the consultant team meet [professional qualification standards](#) set forth by the National Park Service (NPS).

### What is a historic resources survey?

A Historic Resources Survey is a planning tool that is used to identify, document, and evaluate places that may have social, historical, and architectural significance. Data is collected about properties that reflect important themes in a community's history. Survey recommendations can inform long-range planning efforts and project review, support policy goals, and help City officials and others make informed planning and land use decisions.

### Has Alhambra conducted a historic resources survey in the past?

The current Historic Resources Survey represents the first comprehensive citywide survey undertaken in Alhambra. There have been two previous historic resources surveys in Alhambra (conducted in 1980 and 1984); however, both efforts were limited in scope and do not represent a comprehensive inventory of potential historic resources in the city.

## **How is a historic resources survey conducted?**

The Historic Context Statement includes information about the development patterns, important events, people, or groups who helped to shape the city, and provides a baseline understanding of the built environment of a place in order to inform the identification and evaluation of potential historic resources. The historic resources survey builds on the information compiled as part of the development of the Historic Context Statement. At the outset of the Historic Resources Survey, additional research is conducted on properties and neighborhoods to understand the history and potential significance of specific places. The project team then conducts field inspections of potentially eligible properties to identify distinctive architectural features, document alterations, and photograph each property. All evaluations are completed from the public right-of-way. Following the field inspections, additional research is conducted, as needed, and the survey team prepares a list of recommendations for review by the City and the community.

## **What kinds of properties were identified in the survey?**

The Historic Resources Survey evaluated properties for potential eligibility that were constructed through the year 1980. The historic resources survey identified individual properties – including residential, commercial, civic/institutional, infrastructure, and industrial types that appear potentially significant for an association with an important event, pattern of development, significant person, or for architectural merit. The survey also identified groupings of related properties for potential eligibility as historic districts.

## **What is a historic district?**

Standard preservation practice evaluates collections of buildings from similar time periods or representing specific historic contexts as historic districts. The National Park Service defines a historic district as “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.” A historic district derives its significance as a unified entity. The individual components of a historic district collectively convey a specific aspect of history, along with a strong sense of time and place. Residential historic districts illustrate the social and physical development of a city; they can represent the influence of a particular ethnic or social group on the development of the community, as well as the architectural character of a place. Resources that have been found to contribute to the historic identity of a district are referred to as *contributors*. Properties located within the district boundaries that were constructed outside of the identified period of significance for the district, have been substantially altered, or do not contribute to its significance are identified as *non-contributors*. The identification and regulation of potential historic districts in Alhambra will be determined through the development of the Historic Preservation Ordinance in the next phase of the project. Any potential historic districts identified by the Historic Resources Survey are recommendations only at this time.

## How are potential resources evaluated?

For this project, individual properties and potential historic districts were evaluated against criteria established for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resource. Since the potential development of a local Historic Preservation Ordinance will be undertaken in the next phase of the project, properties were evaluated for potential local significance based on the overarching concepts for eligibility embedded in the criteria for listing in the National and California Registers. Broadly, these concepts of potential significance are based on a property's association with important events or patterns of development; important people who have had made a contribution to history; and as an example of a style, type, or method of construction.

## What does it mean if my property is on the list of recommendations?

Properties identified as significant by the Historic Resources Survey represent recommendations of potential eligibility only, pending the development of a local Historic Preservation Ordinance and formal adoption by the City Council. Although surveys identify properties that may be eligible for designation, no actual designation results directly from survey activity. At this time, there is no change to the status of an individual property or potential historic district identified in this survey. During the next phase of the project, the team will work with City staff, the community, and the City Council to develop potential provisions for designating and regulating historic resources in Alhambra. There will be multiple opportunities for the community to provide feedback on the development of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and what that will mean for owners of properties and districts that were identified as historically significant.

## What does it mean if my property is not on the list, and I want my property to be on the list?

The properties and potential historic districts identified as part of the survey are recommendations only. If you have information about a property that you would like to share with the survey team for consideration, you can provide feedback and the Community Meeting on **September 27, 2023**, or you can submit information via the project website [here](#). In addition, if the City adopts a Historic Preservation Ordinance, there will be an opportunity to nominate properties for historic designation, regardless of whether that property was identified as potentially eligible during the survey.

## What if my property is a contributor or non-contributor within a neighborhood listed as a potential historic district?

The identification and regulation of potential historic districts in Alhambra will be determined through the development of the Historic Preservation Ordinance in the next phase of the project. Any potential historic districts identified by the Historic Resources Survey are recommendations only at this time. Therefore, there is no change to the status or designation

of any property located within a potential historic district resulting from the Historic Resources Survey. In Phase 3, the project team, with input from the City and the community, will prepare provisions for a potential Historic Preservation Ordinance, including the potential to designate historic districts, and a process to review proposed changes to contributors and non-contributors within a designated historic district. This could include provisions for appropriate review of potential demolition or alteration to properties that are identified as contributors to a historic district, and appropriate review of new construction proposed on properties that were identified as non-contributors to the district. This does not mean that no changes within a historic district would be possible, only that proposed changes that could impact the historic character and significance of the district could be considered.

## **I have additional questions. Who should I contact?**

Additional information can be found on the project website: [www.historicalhambra.com](http://www.historicalhambra.com). In addition, please feel free to contact Planner Megan Wu with any questions about the project at (626)570-5034 or [historicalhambra@cityofalhambra.org](mailto:historicalhambra@cityofalhambra.org).