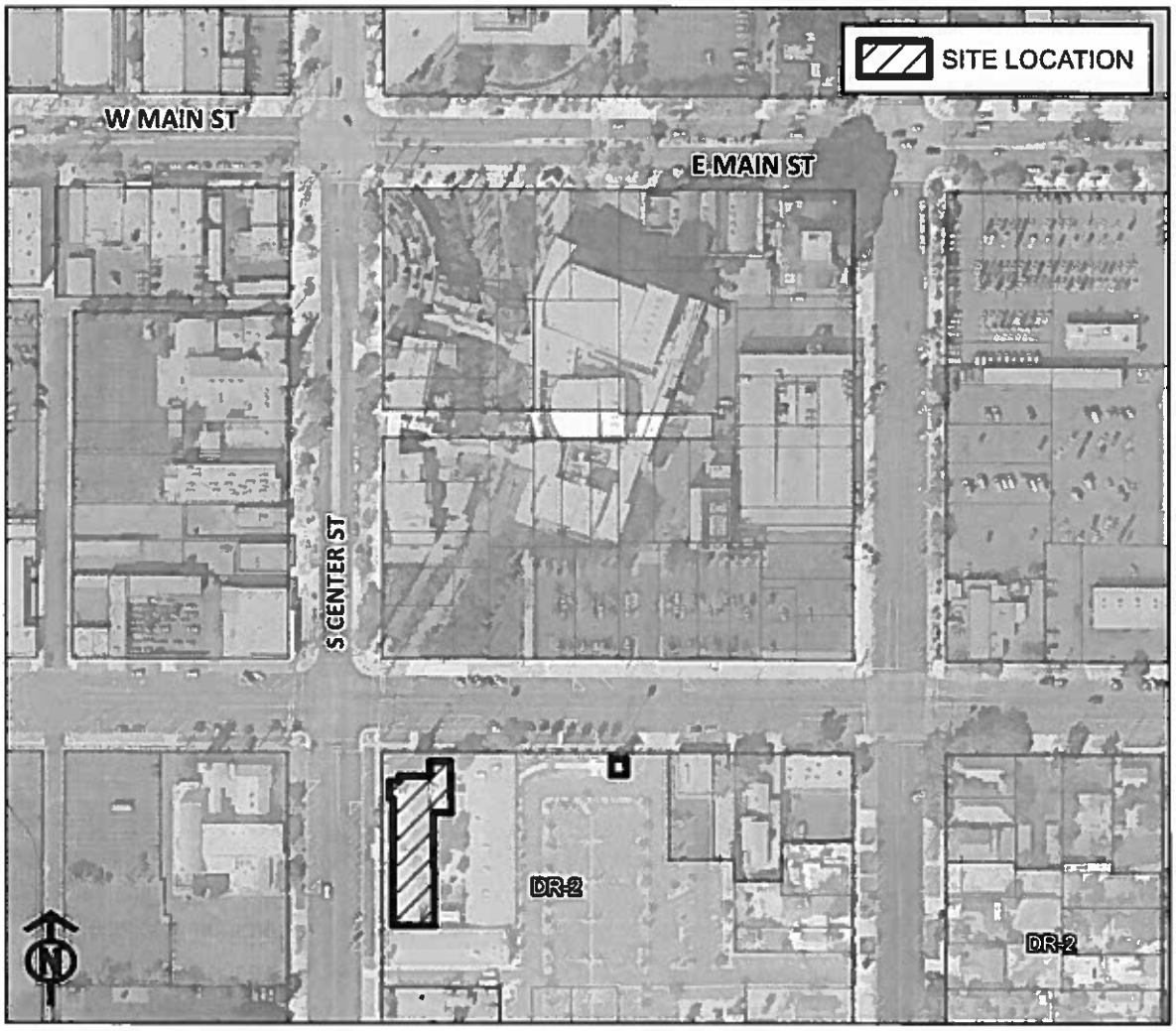

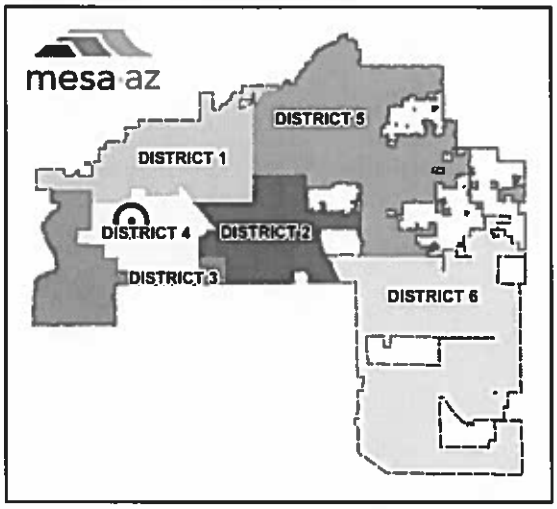

PLANNING AND ZONING VICINITY MAP

CASE:
Z14-032

PROJECT:
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ADDRESS:
15 EAST 1ST AVENUE

REQUEST:
Rezone from DR-2 DE to DR-2 DE HL. This request will establish a Historic Landmark Overlay for the First United Methodist Church of Mesa. (PLN2014-00218)

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Planning and Zoning Board

Case Information

CASE NUMBER:	**Z14-032 (PLN2014-00218)**
LOCATION/ADDRESS:	15 E. 1st Ave
GENERAL VICINITY:	Located at the southeast corner of 1st Avenue and Center Street
REQUEST:	Rezone from DR-2 DE to DR-2 DE HL
PURPOSE:	This request will establish a Historic Landmark Overlay.
COUNCIL DISTRICT:	District 4
OWNER:	First United Methodist Church
APPLICANT:	James Ripley
STAFF PLANNER:	Kim Steadman, RA

SITE DATA

PARCEL NUMBER(S):	138-45-036B
PARCEL SIZE:	4± acres
EXISTING ZONING:	DR-2 DE
GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:	Town Center (TC)
CURRENT LAND USE:	Church

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH:	(across 1st Avenue), The Mesa Arts Center – zoned DC
EAST:	Mostly residential – zoned DR-2, with some commercial – zoned DB-1
SOUTH:	Residential – zoned DR-2.
WEST:	(across Center St.) a church – zoned DB-1, City of Mesa offices – zoned DR-3

ZONING HISTORY/RELATED CASES:

July 15, 1883:	Annexed into the City of Mesa on date of Mesa's incorporation (Ord. #1)
Dec 8, 1987:	Approval of Town Center zoning with associated development standards (Z87-40)
Nov 7, 2011:	Approval of a Downtown Events Overlay District (Z11-017)
May 22, 2014:	Historic Preservation Board recommends approval of HL Overlay (HL14-001)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions
HP BOARD RECOMMENDATION: ☒ Approval with conditions. ☐ Denial
P&Z BOARD RECOMMENDATION: ☐ Approval with conditions. ☐ Denial

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/REQUEST

The Trustees of the First United Methodist Church of Mesa have initiated a rezoning request to establish a Historic Landmark (HL) zoning overlay for specific historic structures within its campus at 15 E. 1st Avenue, to include the sanctuary and steeple, Stewart chapel, and the bell tower atop the columbarium. (See the vicinity map.) The campus is primarily zoned DR-2 DE with additional parcels zoned DB-1 DE. With the added Historic Landmark overlay the historic structures will be zoned DR-2 DE HL.

This request seeks approval of an overlay district that:

- recognizes the historic nature of the buildings;
- commits to preserving the sanctuary/steeple, Stewart chapel and columbarium tower;
- allows modifications and additions to the rest of the campus.

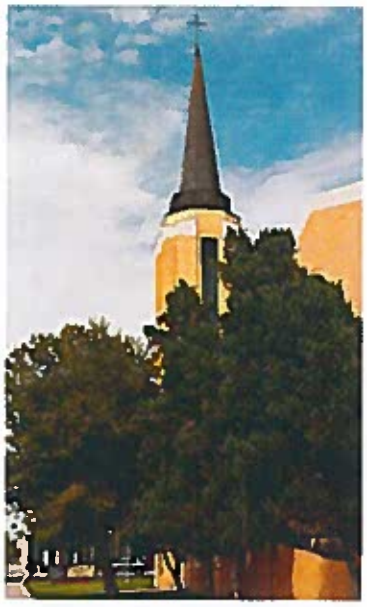
BACKGROUND

The building recognized today as the United Methodist Church of Mesa is actually the third structure on the site. Its predecessors were:

- 1893 – Methodist Episcopal Church, a one-room brick structure with a steeply-pitched, shingled roof and gothic-revival detailing.

- 1913 – A larger, Spanish Colonial style church was built on the site 20 years later. Materials from the first church were incorporated in this structure along with sand and gravel, hauled by the congregation from the Salt River bed for the concrete. The architecture of the building included plastered walls, round-headed windows and a bell tower. The bell tower is now a part of a columbarium (mausoleum) located east of the main church structure. In 1945 the congregation became known as First Methodist Church of Mesa. Population growth in the mid-twentieth century resulted in a need for a larger church. By 1947 the Church was making plans to build an entirely new church on an expanded site.

- The current church was designed by Martin Ray Young, Jr, A1A who, in 1948, was the first architect to establish a practice in Mesa. The new church would include a 120-foot-tall steeple, a 550-seat sanctuary, a 125-seat balcony, a choir room, a robe room, classrooms, an upper floor at the south end of the sanctuary and the Stewart Chapel east of the main entry on 1st Avenue. Breaking ground in 1951 the first element completed was the steeple. In 1954 the congregation began meeting in the sanctuary as the structure neared completion. By 1958 the construction debt was retired and the church was dedicated on February 2nd.



- The campus continued to develop in the ensuing decades until it now fills a large part of a city block. The current request for landmark designation is limited to (1) the original elements built during the period from the 1951 groundbreaking through the 1958 dedication, and (2) the bell tower relocated from the second church to the columbarium.

Current view of campus from north

Historic Landmark Designation

The following features can be used to support historic designation of this building:

- "Any part of it is more than 50 years old"
  - It has been 60 years since the congregation moved into the church in 1954.
  - The bell tower of the columbarium dates to the 1913 church.
- It has "value as a significant reminder of the cultural, historical, architectural, or archeological heritage of the city, state, or nation."
  - In existence since the late 1800s the church campus is the oldest one still in continuous use in Mesa. Its steeple has had a presence on downtown Mesa's skyline since the early 1950s.
- It is "identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the city, state, or nation."
  - In 1893 Dr. E. W. Wilbur donated two parcels of land on 1st Ave for the construction of the first and second churches.
  - Later, in 1951, John Dobson bought additional lands, donating them as a memorial gift from the Dobson family. This gift expanded the Church property west to Center Street and south to Second Avenue.
  - The church is also significant as the church home to the late U. S. Congressman John J. Rhodes (1916 - 2003) who represented Mesa for 30 years.
  - This congregation sponsored Mesa's first Boy Scouts of America troop. Troop #1 was organized in 1922 by the Reverend W. C. Miller. The troop was subsequently changed to #51, and is now #451.
- It is "identified as the work of a master building, designer, or architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state, or nation."
  - As Mesa's first architect Martin Ray Young, Jr., AIA is credited with designing over 1,600 projects in a career that spanned more than 50 years. His collected drawings, files and photographs have been acquired by the Arizona State University Architecture and Environmental Design Library Special Collections.

Ongoing Campus Growth

Protection of the 1950s elements of the church campus and the 1913 bell tower, while allowing for continued growth and modification of the rest of the campus requires standards of protection. The Historic Landmark designation is being applied specifically to the structures identified in the accompanying map. These elements should remain intact, as viewed from the exterior. If modifications or additions to these structures are desired at a future date they will require the review of the Historic Preservation Officer (HPO) who will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work.

The balance of the campus is not protected by this Historic Landmark Overlay.

HISTORIC OVERLAY STANDARDS

In order to preserve the historic structures the following standards will apply to this Historic Landmark overlay:

a) Routine maintenance of the interior and exterior will continue without any requirements for review by the Historic Preservation Officer.
b) Changes to equipment on the roof of the protected structures, not visible from the street do not require review or approval by the Historic Preservation Officer. Anything visible from the Street would require review and approval by the Historic Preservation Officer.
c) Deconstruction of building elements to provide emergency repairs is allowed and authorized without review or approval of the Historic Preservation Officer. Reconstruction plans will subsequently be provided to the Historic Preservation Officer to show the building is being returned to its condition before the emergency work.
d) Interior remodeling of the building will not require review or approval by the Historic Preservation Office. Any proposed interior changes that would be perceived from the exterior require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Officer.
e) Exterior modifications, alterations, or additions to the building should not be allowed. If proposed, modifications, alterations, or additions would require a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Officer to ensure the historic integrity of the building is maintained.
f) Demolition of the structures could be approved following the requirements of the zoning ordinance. Those requirements include a maximum 180 day delay in issuing a demolition permit to allow for consideration of alternatives.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

The United First Methodist Church of Mesa has completed a Citizen Participation Plan, which included mailing written notifications to all property owners within 500' of the site. The notification included a background on the building and an explanation of the request.

At the time of writing this report Staff has not received any inquiry regarding the proposal.

CONFORMANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

The proposed HL overlay for 15 E. 1st Avenue conforms to the City's adopted 2025 General Plan, specifically Section 6.1.2 Redevelopment and Historic Preservation in Mesa. The site is located within the Town Center Redevelopment Area which specifically calls for the preservation of historical assets in the City.

STAFF ANALYSIS

SUMMARY:

The importance of the First United Methodist Church congregation to Mesa's history along with the architectural significance of its building and designer strongly recommend for the protection of these structures through historic designation. The proposed standards will preserve this piece of history.

CONCLUSIONS:

Staff recommends approval with the following conditions:

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. Compliance with the vicinity map included with this report.
2. Compliance with the Historic Overlay Standards provided in this report.

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First United Methodist Church of Mesa

Description of physical appearance

The most prominent feature of the brick traditional style church sanctuary building is the high steeple. A majestic two story north entrance includes carved wood doors. Stained glass windows enhance the sanctuary. A chapel is also located within the structure. East of that building is a landscaped patio encircled by an L-shaped addition which includes classrooms, offices, an assembly room, and a large activity center.

Statement of significance for Criterion A (associatedwith events, activities, or developments that were important in the past)

In existence since the late 1800's, the church campus is the oldest one still in continuous use in Mesa. The city and Methodism have marched forward together since the early days of the late 1800's. When the original Mormon settlers were founding Mesa, steps were being taken to organize a Methodist congregation. The person behind it was Dr. E. W. Wilbur, a medical doctor who had moved to Mesa so that his family's health might improve. Meeting places were scarce in those pioneer days of the early 1890's so the Wilbur family made their spacious barn available. It was located at the intersection of Stapley and Main Street.

Dr. Wilbur's barn

In 1893, Dr. Wilbur acquired two parcels of land between First Avenue and Second Avenue east of Center Street when a debtor defaulted on a loan. He then presented it to the congregation so a church could be built. The first permanent church in Mesa, the 1893 Methodist Episcopal Church building, was a one room brick structure with a peaked wood shingled roof. The entrance foyer faced west with gothic style windows on each side of it. Stained glass windows were featured on the north and south sides. The Reverend Fred Sheldo of the Tempe First Methodist Episcopal Church was also the pastor for this new congregation until 1899 when Reverend Edwin G. Decker was appointed to serve at the church.

1893 Church

By 1913, it was determined that a larger church was needed so a new structure was built on the site at that time. Some of the building materials were recycled from the first church, and members of the congregation hauled sand and gravel from the Salt River bed for the concrete mix. While the building was under construction, the church members met on the second floor of the Barnett Building on Main Street which was also used at that time as a Masonic Hall. The bell tower from the 1913 church is now part of a recently built columbarium.

The Methodist church was active within the community and sponsored Mesa's first Boy Scout Troop, Number 1. It was organized in 1922 by Reverend W.C. Miller, the church pastor. Later the troop number was changed to 51. It is now Troop 451. The boys were in the second Boy Scout Council in Arizona.

First United Methodist Church of Mesa

The 1913 church served the needs of the congregation until World War II when, despite wartime shortages of material and labor, the church was extensively remodeled. That was barely completed when it became evident that more work would be needed because Mesa's population and that of the church were booming. On January 4, 1945, the church's name was changed form First Episcopal Methodist Church of Mesa to First Methodist Church of Mesa.

By 1947, plans were made to build an entirely new large church, but additional land was needed. In 1951, John Dobson purchased the corner property west of the 1913 church which extended to the corner of Center Street and First Avenue southward along Center Street to Second Avenue. He then gave this land to the church as a memorial gift from the Dobson family. At that time, the property was valued at more than $56,000.

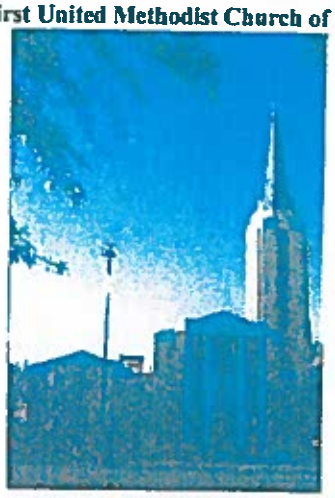
Martin Ray Young, Jr., AIA, who was a descendant of Brigham Young, was chosen as the architect for the new church. In 1948, he was the first architect to establish his practice in Mesa and was the architect for many buildings in the state as illustrated in his book, "The Work of Martin Ray Young, Jr. Architect, Mesa, Arizona." The First Methodist Church is pictured in the publication.

The groundbreaking for the new church was on February 2, 1951. Construction went at a slow pace at first with the speed determined by the availability of funds. The steeple was built first and stood by itself for some time. Then the steel frame of the main portion of the sanctuary was constructed, but the building was not completed until more than three and a half years later. It included the 120 foot tall steeple and sanctuary with pews for 550 people, a balcony for 125, a choir room, robe room, several classrooms, and an upper floor on the south end of the sanctuary. The Stewart Chapel was also a part of the construction. Even though the church structure was not quite completed, the congregation began meeting in it in October of 1954. On February 2, 1958, when there was no longer any debt for the building, it was dedicated by the church conference.

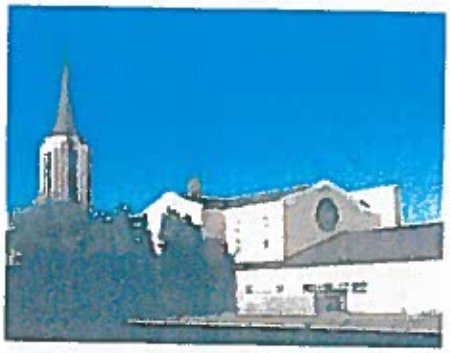
By that time, plans were already under way for the second phase of construction which was to include the church offices, classrooms, an assembly room, the Earl North Fellowship Hall, and a kitchen. On June 7, 1959, the groundbreaking for the L shaped structure of Phase Two took place, and the architectural firm of Horlbeck, Hickman and Associates, AIA, of Mesa was hired as the architects for the addition. A construction workers' strike initially slowed work, but by April 9, 1960, the building was completed. With funds provided by the Larkin Fitch family, the patio area between the new structure and the sanctuary was enhanced as was an east entrance from the parking lot. Barracks from a WWII Japanese relocation camp near Casa Grande and houses on the east side of the property which had been used for classrooms were removed so adequate parking could be available. The acquisition of additional land over a period of several years made it possible to access the parking lot from Second Avenue as well as First Avenue.

Located at 15 East First Avenue, the church is currently known as the First United Methodist Church of Mesa.

First United Methodist Church of Mesa

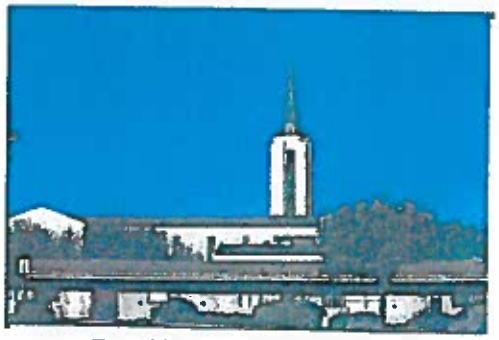


North side: Stewart Chapel and sanctuary



West side

South side: Earl North Fellowship Hall



East side: Classrooms and offices

Photographs of surrounding areas as seen from the church property

North of the church on First Avenue is the Mesa Arts Center.

West of the church on First Avenue are a Latter Day Saints Ward and a new apartment complex for seniors. The Goldwater Library will be built west of the apartments.

East of the church on First Avenue is the Mesa Court House, urban gardens, and the Mormon Temple.

South of the church is not visible due to the campus size and the parking lots.

Criterion "C"

Chosen as architect for the First United Methodist Church was **Martin Ray Young, Jr.** who was a member of the Mormon faith and a descendant of Brigham Young, the Mormon leader who led them in the 1840's to Utah. He was the first architect in Mesa when he and has designed more than 1600 projects in a career that spanned more than 50 years.

Young graduated from Brigham Young University named after his descendants. He designed churches, residences, schools and commercial buildings, mostly in Arizona but also in New Mexico, California, Utah and Colorado. Some of his most prominent projects in Arizona include the First United Methodist Church of Mesa, Paradise Valley Apostolic Church, Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tempe, and the Mesa Historical Society Museum. He was the founding president of the Rio Salado Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and a recipient of the prestigious Kachina Award from the Arizona College of Fellows of AIA.

Before his death in February 1999, he published a book titled, "The Work of Martin Ray Young, Jr. Architect, Mesa, Arizona". The First United Methodist Church of Mesa is shown in the book.

Correspondence from his third daughter, DeAnn Young McCune notes, "My dad patterned many of his lines after Frank Lloyd Wright – a personal friend of his.", "he loved being an architect. He decided to be one when he was about 6 and died @ 83 still drafting and designing."

The sanctuary building is described as follows:

"The building design expresses aspiration. The lines have an upward trend, expressing faith and praise in a material world. The tower, rising 120 feet, provides a note of climax, symbolizing hope... The long center aisle, leading from the entrance to the high alter, speaks of God's availability to all mankind... Our sanctuary is very plain in appearance, being devoid of any elaborate decorative symbols. Yet one cannot enter this place of worship without wanting to think of God, discover his will, and take his strength."

First United Methodist Church of Mesa
15 East First Avenue, Mesa, AZ 85210
Tel 480-969-5577

PROJECT/CITIZEN PARTICIPATION REPORT

PROJECT SUMMARY

REPORT DATE	PROJECT NAME	PREPARED BY
June 4, 2014	First United Methodist Church of Mesa	Jim Ripley and Wendy Mack-Allred

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Citizen Participation Plan is to inform citizens, property owners, neighbor associations, agencies, schools and businesses in the vicinity of the site of an application for a Historic Overlay. The site is located at 15 East First Avenue (corner of First Avenue and Center Street).

The request is for a rezone from DR-2 DE to DR-2 HL, to establish a Historic Landmark Overlay for the Church Sanctuary, Stewart Chapel and the Bell Tower.

This report is confirmation that citizens, neighbors, public agencies and interested persons have had adequate opportunity to learn about and comment on the proposed plans and actions addressed in the application. Supportive documentation is attached as required.

CONTACT/AUTHORIZED APPLICANT

James Ripley	Telephone: 480-827-2859	Email: jimripleyaz@gmail.com
Wendy Mack-Allred	Telephone: 480-641-9854	Email: mackallred@cox.net

PROJECT OVERVIEW

TASK	DATE SUBMITTED	NOTES
Application for Historic Register	11/19/2013	Submitted to John Wesley
Application Amendment	03/31/2014	Added additional info
Project Plan	01/04/2014	Submitted to John Wesley & Kim Steadman
City Rezone Application	01/06/2014	Submitted to John Wesley & Kim Steadman
Planning Case Number Assigned	04/30/2014	Case #HL14-001 from Kim Steadman, Planner
Public Notice Letters #1	05/07/2014	60 letters covering 500' radius
HPB Notification	04/30/2014	Done by, Kim Steadman
Public Notice – The Arizona Republic	05/07/2014	Paper & Online with AZCentral, Kim Steadman
Attend HPB Meeting	05/22/2014	Application Approved by HPB
Request P&Z Hearing	05/26/2014	Scheduled for 06/18/2014, Kim Steadman
Planning Case Number Assigned	05/27/2014	Case #Z14-032 from Kim Steadman, Planner

Public Notice-Church Bulletin	06/01/2014	650 Church Membership/Congregation
Public Notice Letters #2	06/02/2014	60 letters covering 500' radius
Public Notice 4'x4' Sign	06/02/2014	Church-Corner of 1st Avenue & Center
Affidavit of Public Notice Posting	06/04/2014	Signed & Notarized, submitted to Kim Steadman
8"x10" Photo of Public Notice Sign	06/04/2014	Submitted to Kim Steadman
Citizen Participation Report	06/04/2014	Submitted to Kim Steadman, Planner

PUBLIC COMMENTS

ISSUE	ASSIGNED TO	DATE
Resident phoned church and asked if the Church will receive a tax break with the zoning overlay change.	Jim Ripley	05/09/2014
ANSWER		
Resident received a call back from Jim Ripley		05/09/2014 @ 11:30am
The Church property is already exempt from property. t		

CONCLUSIONS

To continue with Rezone for Historic Overlay for the Sanctuary, Stewart Chapel and the Bell Tower as planned.
To attend the P&Z Hearing date of 06/18/2014 and if approved to submit to the City of Mesa City Council Board for approval on 07/07/2014 and if approved to attend the Public Hearing scheduled for 07/21/2014.

Comments regarding historic landmark status

Jim,

You received a call here at the church today, lady was asking all kinds of questions regarding church being registered as a Historic site. Her name is Kim Kifner 480-610-9090.

blessings,
Rhonda R. Walkosz
Director of Youth
First United Methodist Church of Mesa
(480) 969-5577

Call returned and Ms Kifner talked at about 11:30 a.m. on May 9. She wanted to know what the church gains from the change. I told her it is primarily recognition and prestige of being on the city's web site. She asked if the church gets a property tax break with the zoning overlay change. I told her, No it does not because the church is already exempt from property taxes.