



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: April 10, 2014 REPORT NO. HRB-14-032

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of April 24, 2014

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – Ocean Beach Community Plan Update**

APPLICANT: City of San Diego

LOCATION: Ocean Beach Community, Council District 2

DESCRIPTION: Review and consider the Ocean Beach Historic Context Statement (Context), the Historic Preservation Element of the Ocean Beach Community Plan update (HPE), and the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) related to Cultural/Historical Resources for the purposes of making a Recommendation on the adoption of the Context, HPE and FEIR to the City Council.

Today's Action: Recommend to the City Council adoption of the Context, HPE, and FEIR or do not recommend adoption.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to the City Council adoption of the Ocean Beach Historic Context Statement, the Historic Preservation Element of the Ocean Beach Community Plan update, and the Final Environmental Impact Report related to Cultural/Historical Resources.

BACKGROUND

An historic context statement was prepared in support of the Ocean Beach Community Plan Update (OBCPU). The purpose of the context statement is to provide the historic context for the development of Ocean Beach and identify themes significant to that development. The information in this document will be used to identify locations in Ocean Beach which contain significant historical resources. In addition, it was used to shape the Historic Preservation Element of the OBCPU. Once adopted, the community plan will implement the City's General Plan and will include the following elements: Land Use, Mobility, Urban Design, Economic Prosperity, Public Facilities, Services and Safety, Recreation, Conservation, Noise, Historic Preservation, and an implementation chapter that describes the necessary actions and key parties responsible for realizing the plan's vision.

DISCUSSION

The community of Ocean Beach is located on San Diego's coast in an area of approximately one square mile and bordered by the Peninsula Community Planning Area to the south and east and Mission Bay Regional Park to the north. The boundaries of the community are the San Diego River on the north, the Pacific Ocean on the west, Adair Street on the south, and Froude and West Point Loma Boulevard on the east. Ocean Beach was originally developed as a resort community and grew to become a small residential community. Post-World War II developments grew the community further as a place for people to live and play in a casual beach environment.

Historic Context Statement

The Historic Context Statement (Attachment 1), prepared by the City of San Diego, outlines the project overview; identifies previously recorded historical and archeological resources within Ocean Beach; provides an historic context for the Community Plan area; discusses property types and the themes they reflect; and makes recommendations based on the results of the survey.

In support of the OBCPU, a records search revealed 10 historic sites within Ocean Beach that have been recorded by the South Coastal Information Center. Additionally, the Historic Context Statement identifies 73 sites in Ocean Beach that have been designated historic by the City of San Diego, including one archaeological resource. Ocean Beach Gateway Site (HRB Site #398), was a prehistoric campsite occupied as part of series of major encampments along the course of the San Diego River during the Archaic and Late Prehistoric periods. Artifacts include grinding tools, flaked tools used for scraping, pounding and cutting, pottery, animal bone, marine shell, fire-affected rock, and other lithic materials used during the occupation of the site. Sparse and fragmentary scatter of historic materials dating from the 1920s and 1930s were found, as well. The 72 other designated resources identified in the Historic Context are contributing resources to the Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historical District, which is comprised of beach cottages and bungalows built between 1887 and 1931. Two of the 72 contributing resources are designated as individually significant structures – the Strand Theater (HRB Site #561), and the Ocean Beach Library (HRB Site #565). Since the completion of the Historic Context Statement, one additional individually significant site has been designated historic by the City, the Cecil Roper House (HRB Site #943), a Modern Organic Geometric style residence constructed in 1963-64.

Historic Context

The Ocean Beach area embodies several important historic contexts, some of which are city wide and others that are unique to the plan area. The Ocean Beach contexts focus on chronology and corresponding significant historic themes. Also presented is the prehistoric context for Ocean Beach along with significant research questions that may be addressed by the archaeological and Native American resources extant within the planning area. The following outlines the early historic contexts that are associated with Ocean Beach:

- *Prehistory of Ocean Beach.* The prehistory of the San Diego region is evidenced through archaeological remains representing up to 10,500 years of Native American occupation. Prior to Spanish settlement of San Diego in 1769, the area currently known as Ocean Beach had been used for seasonal gathering of shellfish and various plants by the Kumeyaay people for over 800 years. The Kumeyaay were a hunting and gathering culture that adapted to a wide range of ecological zones from the coast to the Peninsular Range. Various prehistoric period archaeological resources have been identified within the Ocean Beach community, consisting primarily of shell middens, which strongly suggest that the procurement, processing and consumption of shellfish was a major activity within Ocean Beach during prehistoric times.

- *Early History of Ocean Beach (1769-1887).* Under Spanish rule beginning in 1769, land was divided into presidios, missions and pueblos. After Mexico achieved independence from Spain, San Diego was granted pueblo status and received permission to form a municipal government in 1834. Under both Spanish and Mexican rule, Ocean Beach was used for picnics and light recreation, but the area was not settled as it was considered too remote, and lacked fresh running water. During the early American period of development beginning with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1846, the Derby Dike was constructed to redirect the flow of the San Diego River away from San Diego Bay. The dike provided a new means of access for visitors to Ocean Beach from Old Town who continued to picnic there. Soon Ocean Beach gained its first permanent settler, a man by the name of Palmer, who built a shack and hosted visitors for outings and events until at least the 1870s. Ocean Beach gradually gained popularity as a getaway location as more individuals and families visited for picnics, fishing or camping trips.

The following themes and periods are part of the American Period of development and represent the broad patterns of historical development of the community and are reflected in the area's physical development and character.

- *Resort Town (1887-1930)*
 - *Carlson and Higgins (1887-1890).* During the economic boom of 1880s, brought on by the arrival of the railroad in 1885, the first subdivision map was filed by William Carlson and Frank Higgins in 1887 within the limits of the current community plan area. Carlson and Higgins had grand plans for the new subdivision: constructing a resort hotel and hosting large picnics, they campaigned heavily to sell lots to average income and vacation buyers. Their endeavors were quickly abandoned due to transportation woes and the economic downturn in 1888.

 - *The Quiet Years (1890-1907).* Still without major infrastructure improvements such as water and sewer connections at the turn of the century, Ocean Beach returned to its original state as a remote vacation and picnic destination for San Diegans. By 1908, less than twenty vacation shacks and tent houses were scattered throughout the area.

- *D.C. Collier: Father of Ocean Beach (1907-1913)*. With the help of the young David Charles (D.C.) Collier, Ocean Beach saw a flurry of activity and growth with the filing of a handful of new subdivisions and the installation of significant improvements such as street grading, water, gas, and electricity infrastructure, a functional streetcar line, and a two-room schoolhouse. These development ventures begun by Collier laid the foundation for a more viable community that would grow and thrive. Willson Chamberlain followed suit with the filing of an additional subdivision and the construction of a plunge or “bathing pavilion” at the foot of Voltaire Street in 1908.

- *Height of the Resort Era (1913-1930)*. The resort town character of Ocean Beach flourished during this period with the establishment of numerous business ventures catering to those seeking recreation, leisure and social activities. Notable among these was Willson Chamberlain’s wildly successful albeit short-lived Wonderland Park – San Diego’s first large amusement park, which boasted several attractions including a rollercoaster, casino, café and zoo. Many other leisure and recreation-oriented establishments developed also, including dance halls, skating rink, merry-go-round, theaters and the Silver Spray Plunge. Institutional development grew with the construction of Fire Station No. 15, a library, and various churches. This period also experienced the beginnings of surfing culture starting in 1916. Residential, commercial and institutional development all steadily grew during this time. Ocean Beach’s popularity as a weekend destination declined as the new resort town of Mission Beach and Belmont Park to the north drew the attention of visitors.

- *Ocean Beach: The Community (1930-Present)*
 - *Transition to Community (1930-1945)*. By the late 1920s Ocean Beach had begun its transition from a seaside resort to a community. Street paving began in the mid-1920s and would continue through the end of the decade. The local silent theater was replaced by the new Strand Theater in 1925, and in 1928 the Ocean Beach Library opened. Local clubs and social organizations, such as the Ocean Beach Women’s Club and the Tuesday Club fostered a sense of community, while the local Chamber of Commerce promoted local businesses. In 1930 the Ocean Beach Lighting District was formed and the first zoning maps and regulations were established in the City. Zoning in Ocean Beach was divided into residential zones of varying density and a commercial zone. Although City-wide zones have changed and expanded over the years, the land use designations and allowable residential density have remained relatively unaltered in Ocean Beach since the first zoning action, which is reflected in the development patterns in Ocean Beach. The little development seen in Ocean Beach during the lean times of the Great Depression and World War II expressed a more contemporary design aesthetic in the Streamline Moderne and Minimal Traditional styles.

 - *Post-War Development (1945-1970)*. Population and development exploded in Ocean Beach following World War II as military personnel, the wartime civilian workforce, and later returning GIs and their families flooded the community.

Single family and low density multi-family housing began to fill the once-sparse hillside. Stylistically, residential development transitioned from Minimal Traditional to Contemporary, Post and Beam, and Ranch styles. Commercial development intensified to serve the growing resident population. Relative isolation and inaccessibility brought on by the construction of Interstate 5 facilitated broad cultural changes in the community during the 1960s and 1970s.

As part of the preparation of the Historic Context Statement, a cursory windshield survey was conducted by historical resources staff in 2007 and 2009. Staff observed early residential cottage/bungalow structures scattered throughout the Planning Area, not all of which have been evaluated for significance to the Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historical District. Post-World War II development is scattered throughout the community, but is found in the greatest concentrations on the hillside to the far east and south, and west of Sunset Cliffs Boulevard close to the ocean where land values and density allowances are higher. The three commercial districts appear to retain varying degrees of integrity. Individually significant resources may be present throughout the community.

Historic street lighting is extant in several locations, including Abbott Street, Newport Avenue, Santa Monica Avenue, Voltaire Street and Bacon Street, as detailed in Table 5.

Recommendations

Based on the historic context and cursory windshield survey, it is recommended that a complete reconnaissance survey be completed for the Planning Area to identify more precisely the location of potentially significant historic resources. The Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historical District should be intensely surveyed to identify any remaining contributing resources not previously brought forward for designation. It is also recommended that the three commercial areas at Voltaire,

Newport and Point Loma Avenue be intensely surveyed to determine whether or not districts may be present at these locations. Post-World War II structures should be evaluated for significance to the post-War development of Ocean Beach and for architectural significance within the City-wide Modernism Context Statement. Historic street lighting and furniture should be catalogued and preserved. A complete context related to the surfing culture of Ocean Beach should be undertaken to assist with the identification, evaluation and preservation of resources significant to that context. Lastly, it is recommended that interpretation of Ocean Beach's early resort town history be pursued in the form of interpretative signs, markers, displays, exhibits and/or printed brochures.

Historic Preservation Element

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Element (Attachment 2) of the Ocean Beach Community Plan Update (CPU) is to guide the preservation, protection and restoration of historical and cultural resources within the CPU area. This element includes goals and recommendations for addressing the history and historic resources unique to Ocean Beach in order to encourage appreciation of the community's history and culture. These recommendations along with the General Plan policies provide a comprehensive historic preservation strategy for

Ocean Beach. The following historic preservation recommendations have been developed for the CPU.

- 9.1.1 Conduct subsurface investigations at the project level to identify potentially significant archaeological resources in Ocean Beach.
- 9.1.2 Protect and preserve significant archaeological resources. Refer significant sites to the Historical Resources Board for designation.
- 9.1.3 Ensure adequate data recovery and mitigation for adverse impacts to archaeological and Native American sites at the project level. In order to determine ethnic or cultural significance of archaeological sites or landscapes to the Native American community, meaningful consultation is necessary.
- 9.1.4 Include measures during new construction to monitor and recover buried deposits from the historic period and address significant research questions related to prehistory.
- 9.1.5 Identify, designate, preserve, and restore historical buildings in Ocean Beach and encourage their adaptive reuse.
- 9.1.6 Conduct a reconnaissance survey of the Planning Area to identify more precisely the location of potentially significant historic resources.
- 9.1.7 Conduct an intensive survey of the Planning Area to identify any remaining resources not previously brought forward for designation as part of the Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historical District. Convert the District to a Multiple Property Listing under the Beach Cottage context.
- 9.1.8 Conduct an intensive survey of the three commercial areas at Voltaire Street, Newport Avenue and Point Loma Avenue to determine whether or not historic districts may be present at these locations and process any potential districts.
- 9.1.9 Evaluate Depression-era and Post-World War II structures for significance to the post-War development of Ocean Beach and for architectural significance within the San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement.
- 9.1.10 Catalogue and preserve historic street lighting and furniture. Maintain and preserve other nonstructural features of the historic and cultural landscape, such as sidewalk scoring and coloring, sidewalk stamps and landscaping.
- 9.1.11 Develop a historic context statement related to the surfing culture of Ocean Beach to assist with the identification, evaluation and preservation of resources significant to that history.

- 9.2.1 Include well-preserved archaeological artifacts in an exhibit that could temporarily be housed at the Ocean Beach Library to better inform the public about the prehistoric occupation and the historic development of Ocean Beach.
- 9.2.2 Provide opportunities for education and interpretation of Ocean Beach's early resort town history through the distribution of printed brochures and walking tours, and the installation of interpretive signs, markers, displays, and exhibits at public buildings and parks.
- 9.2.3 Partner with the Ocean Beach Historical Society to better inform and educate the public on the merits of historic preservation by providing information on the resources themselves, as well as the purpose and objectives of the preservation program. Support the ongoing efforts of the Ocean Beach Historical Society to advance the understanding and preservation of the history of Ocean Beach.
- 9.2.4 Promote the maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation and continued private ownership and utilization of historical resources through a variety of financial and development incentives.
- 9.2.5 Continue to use existing incentive programs and develop new approaches, such as architectural assistance and relief from setback requirements through a development permit process, as needed.
- 9.2.6 Work with local businesses and organizations, such as the Ocean Beach Main Street Association and the Ocean Beach Historical Society, to create and promote new heritage tourism programs.
- 9.3.1 Encourage the reuse of materials and the adaptation of historically significant structures to help sustain the community character.
- 9.3.2 Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value.
- 9.3.3 Promote the preservation of buildings and features that provide continuity with the past.
- 9.3.4 Encourage new buildings to express a variety of architectural styles, but do so with full awareness of, and respect for, the height, mass, articulation and materials of the surrounding historic buildings and culturally significant resources.
- 9.3.5 Look to historic buildings for design and architectural ideas and inspiration.
- 9.4.1 Expand cultural heritage tourism opportunities, such as the preservation of the Strand Theater and encourage its use as a mixed-use entertainment venue. Conduct walking tours of historical resources, and protect historical properties and cultural assets.
- 9.4.2 Partner with the Ocean Beach Main Street Association, Ocean Beach Historical Society and other environmental preservation organizations and interested parties to promote

conservation, restoration, educational programs/tours, stewardship, and create cultural tourism programs focusing on the community's seaside heritage.

Environmental Impact Report

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared to address the significant effects of the proposed Community Plan Update (Attachment 3), including potentially significant impacts to Cultural/Historical Resources as further detailed in EIR Section 4.4 Cultural/Historical Resources (Attachment 4). The EIR concludes that because the proposed plan update area includes known historic and prehistoric resources and implementation of the plan update would facilitate future development, there is the potential for the project to significantly impact these resources. Goals, policies, and recommendations enacted by the City, combined with the federal, state, and local regulations, provide a regulatory framework for developing project-level historical resources mitigation measures for future development projects implemented in accordance with the Community Plan Update (CPU).

Impacts from future development on historical and archaeological resources in the CPU area would occur at the project level. Any grading, excavation, and other ground disturbing activities associated with future development implemented in accordance with the CPU that would affect significant archaeological sites or Traditional Cultural Properties would represent a significant impact to historical resources.

Impacts to resources associated with the built environment would include substantial alteration, relocation, or demolition of historic buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, and sites. Impacts from future development on the built environment would occur at the project-level. Any alteration, relocation, or demolition associated with future development that would affect historic buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, and sites would represent a significant impact to historical resources.

A Mitigation Framework has been incorporated into the FEIR to address potential impact to archaeological resources and historic buildings, structures and objects from future development implemented in accordance with the CPU. All future development projects are subject to discretionary review, due to the OBCPU location within the coastal overlay zone. A project that would result in significant impacts to historical resources would be subject to a Mitigation Framework depending on the type of resource impacted.

Projects that would result in significant impacts to archaeological resources shall be subject to Mitigation Framework HIST-1, whereby the City shall require the following steps be taken to determine: (1) the presence of archaeological resources and (2) the appropriate mitigation for any significant resources which may be impacted by a development activity. Sites may include, but are not limited to, residential and commercial properties, privies, trash pits, building foundations, and industrial features representing the contributions of people from diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. Sites may also include resources associated with prehistoric Native American activities. This same Mitigation Framework would also be used in the unlikely event that build out of the OBCPU area would impact religious or sacred places or human remains.

Projects that would result in significant impacts to historical, built environment resources shall be subject to Mitigation Framework HIST-2, whereby the City shall determine whether the affected building/structure is historically significant. The evaluation of historic architectural resources shall be based on criteria such as: age, location, context, association with an important person or event, uniqueness, or structural integrity, as indicated in the Guidelines. Preferred mitigation for historic buildings or structures shall be to avoid the resource through project redesign. If the resource cannot be entirely avoided, all prudent and feasible measures to minimize harm to the resource shall be taken.

Future development implemented in accordance with the OBCPU that would potentially result in impacts to historical resources would be required to incorporate the Mitigation Framework measures adopted in conjunction with the certification of the Program EIR (PEIR). Therefore, the program-level impact related to prehistoric or historical archaeological sites and historic resources of the built environment would be reduced to below a level of significance.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the historic context recommendations have been incorporated into the planning process for Ocean Beach and are reflected in goals and policies of the Historic Preservation Element, and the Final EIR includes a mitigation framework for cultural and historical resources that would reduce impacts anticipated from future projects. Therefore, staff recommends the HRB recommend to the City Council adoption of the Ocean Beach Historic Context Statement, the Historic Preservation Element of the Ocean Beach Community Plan update, and the Final Environmental Impact Report related to Cultural/Historical Resources.



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Attachments:

1. Ocean Beach Historic Context Statement
2. Historic Preservation Element of the Ocean Beach Community Plan Update
3. Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Ocean Beach Community Plan Update (Under separate cover)
4. EIR Section 4.4 Cultural/Historical Resources