



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

CHAPTER 9: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

GOALS

- A high-quality built environment enriched by the identification and preservation of Clairemont's significant historical, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources.
- Creation of commemorative, interpretive, and educational opportunities related to historical and tribal cultural resources in the Clairemont community.

INTRODUCTION

This Historic Preservation Element provides a summary of the prehistory and history of the Clairemont community and establishes policies to support the identification and preservation of the historical, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources of the community.

A Historic Context Statement and a Cultural Resources Constraints Analysis were prepared in support of the Community Plan to assist property owners, developers, consultants, community members, and City staff in the identification and preservation of significant historical, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources within Clairemont.



*Clairemont Development Office, 1953
(Credit: San Diego History Center)*

PRE-HISTORIC AND HISTORIC CONTEXT

The prehistoric context briefly describes the known cultural traditions and settlement patterns of the prehistoric and early historic periods, and the historic context provides a broad-brush historical overview of the overarching forces that have shaped land use patterns and development of the built environment within the Clairemont during the historic period.

TRIBAL CULTURAL HISTORY (PRE-EUROPEAN CONTACT)

Tribal cultural history is reflected in the history, beliefs and legends retained in songs and stories passed down through generations within Native American tribes. There is also an ethnohistoric period of events, traditional cultural practices and spiritual beliefs of indigenous peoples recorded from the post-European contact era. The traditional origin belief of the Yuman-speaking peoples of Southern California reflects a cosmology that includes aspects of a mother earth and father sky, and religious rituals were tied to specific sacred locations. A pre-historic material culture is contained in the archaeological record and reflects subsistence practices and settlement patterns over several prehistoric periods spanning the last 10,000 years. It is important to note that Native American aboriginal lifeways did not cease at European contact.

Clairemont is located within the ancestral homeland and unceded territory of the Yuman-speaking Kumeyaay, also known as Ipai, Tipai, or Diegueño. The Kumeyaay bands lived in semi-sedentary, political autonomous camping spots or villages near river valleys and along the shoreline of coastal estuaries in southern San Diego and southwestern Imperial counties, and northern Baja California.

At the time of Spanish colonization in the late 1700s, several major Kumeyaay villages were located in proximity to the Clairemont community. The closest was the village of Jamo located immediately adjacent to Clairemont along west side of Rose Canyon, where the Rose Canyon drainage enters into Mission Bay. Another nearby village was the village of Cosoy, located along the south side of the San Diego River near the location of the San Diego Presidio and the first location of the Mission de Alcalá, approximately a mile to the south of Clairemont. Both of these village locations were documented as inhabited at the inception of Spanish colonization when they were visited by the Spanish during the Portolá expedition in 1769.

A third nearby village, located upriver along the north side of the San Diego River, was the village of Nipaquay at the second and final location of the San Diego Mission de Alcalá, approximately three miles southeast of Clairemont. A fourth nearby village, indicated to also be located along the lower San Diego River, was the village of Sinyeweche to the east of the village of Nipaquay.

Some native speakers referred to river valleys as oon-ya, meaning trail or road, describing one of the main routes linking the interior of San Diego with the coast. For example, the floodplain from the San Diego Mission de Alcalá to the ocean was hajiror qajir. It is likely that the Kumeyaay people used the San Diego River valley, as well as Rose Canyon and its tributaries, as travel corridors from interior coastal plain areas, to and from villages located along, and at the mouth of the river, such as Cosoy, Jamo, Nipaguay, and Sinyeweche as well as other villages along the coast to the north of the river and the Clairemont community, including Ystagua, Peñasquitos, and Pawai/Pawai/Paguay. The Kumeyaay are the Most Likely Descendants for all Native American human remains found in the City of San Diego.

MORENA TOWNSITE, VICTORIAN PERIOD DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT STASIS (1888-1929)

Until the late 1880s, Clairemont was essentially an untouched natural landscape. Developed by the Morena Company, a syndicate led by Oliver J. Stough, the Morena tract was recorded in May of 1888 amidst a local real estate boom that started slowly in 1885, peaked in 1887, and collapsed by 1890. The first residential improvement occurred in 1888 with the construction of a two-story Victorian style dwelling intended to serve as a hotel or boarding house for guests or personnel working in the town site. By 1890, the City Directory identified 16 residents of the Morena District. In the late 1800s the Pacific Steam Ship Company, which operated the Pacific Coast Railway, constructed the Morena Station (demolished in the 1920s) on the southwest edge of the Clairemont. By the 1910s, Alexander Ambort's dairy ranch occupied the undeveloped lots on the northern portion of the Morena tract and would remain there through the 1940s. The Ambort Residence, constructed in ca. 1896 by the Schaniel Brothers, is extant today at 4440 Ingulf Street.

Morena and its vicinity continued to evolve and grow as a suburban district, albeit slowly and with significant gaps in time brought on by the panic and depression of 1893, focus on growth around Balboa Park resultant from the 1915 - 1916 Panama-California Exposition, World War I (WWI), and later, the Great Depression. Although 18 subdivision maps were filed during this period, the overwhelming majority of Clairemont, on the mesa to the north and northeast of Morena, remained undeveloped and dominated by chaparral and bifurcated by Tecolote Creek and Tecolote Canyon. The extant property types associated with this theme include single family residences constructed in Victorian-era styles.

BAY PARK VILLAGE, COMMUNITY BUILDING AND FHA PRINCIPLES

Established in 1934 to reform home financing practices, to improve the quality of small homes for low- to middle- income families, and to stimulate the building industry during the Great Depression, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) regulated home building practices by approving properties for mortgage insurance and publishing standards for housing and subdivision design. In June of 1936, real estate developer Harold J. Peterson announced his plans for Bay Park Village, a community constructed in accordance with FHA guidelines, within a portion of the defunct Morena tract. The tract formally opened by June of 1937, with all streets paved, olive trees planted in the public plaza, and 18 model single-family homes built in the Minimal Traditional style.

By 1938, the neighborhood had been improved with 60 homes, necessitating construction of Bay Park Elementary School and formation of a civic organization. Residential development in the Bay Park Village subdivision continued though the 1940s and beyond. In total, 246 buildings were constructed in the tract. Subsequent to Bay Park Village and prior to major construction of Clairemont to the east, three additional tracts were recorded in the vicinity of the old Morena district: Weston Highlands (1941), Hazard Tract #1 (1949), and Bay Park Vista Unit #1 (1950). The extant property types associated with this theme include single family residences in residential tracts, one- part commercial block buildings and public buildings in Minimal Traditional and Modernistic styles.



SAN DIEGO'S PREMIERE SUBURB CLAIREMONT, A VILLAGE WITHIN A CITY (1950s-1970s)

In 1945, at the end of WWII, America faced the seemingly insurmountable task of providing new housing for a large population of returning veterans and their families. Named after developer Carlos Tavares' wife, Claire, at the time of its inception in 1950, Clairemont was only second in size to Long Island's Levittown. As it developed, the community was planned in a manner consistent with the Urban Land Institute's Community Builders Handbook, ultimately allocating lands for the construction of schools, shopping centers, parks, and other civic and commercial uses. Its designers rejected the traditional street grid system and instead included curvilinear streets to conform to the natural system of canyons and mesas that characterize the area.



Top: Morena Subdivision Sale of Lots, Circa 1887
Bottom: Bay Park Village Information Office
(Photo Credits: San Diego History Center)

RESOURCE PRESERVATION

A Cultural Resources Constraints Analysis and a Historic Context Statement were prepared in conjunction with the Community Plan. The Cultural Resources Constraints Analysis describes the tribal cultural history (pre-contact/ protohistoric and pre-history) in the Clairemont area, identifies known significant archaeological resources, provides guidance on the identification of possible new resources, and includes recommendations for proper treatment. The Historic Context Statement provides information regarding the significant historical themes in the development of Clairemont and the property types associated with those themes. These documents have been used to inform the policies and recommendations of the Community Plan and the associated environmental analysis. Cultural resources documented within the boundaries of Clairemont include 12 prehistoric cultural resources and three historic-period archaeological resources. The prehistoric cultural resources are located primarily along the periphery of the study area, within canyons, and consist of four marine shell scatters, four marine shell and lithic artifact scatters, two lithic artifact scatters, and a total of three isolated flakes.

Cultural sensitivity levels and the likelihood of encountering archaeological or tribal cultural resources within Clairemont are rated low, moderate, or high based on the results of records searches, Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Sacred Lands File checks, tribal consultation, and regional environmental factors. The cultural sensitivity of the majority of the Clairemont Planning Area was assessed as low based on these factors and the amount of modern development that has occurred within the Clairemont Community Planning Area. Undeveloped areas within or near the canyons contain a moderate sensitivity for archaeological resources, with the bottoms of the major canyons, where young alluvial flood-plain deposits are present, containing a high sensitivity.

Clairemont is presently home to two designated historical resources, the Stough-Beckett Cottage located at 2203 Denver Street (HRB Site #146) and the Aizo and Komume Sogo Farm located at 1398 Lieta Street (HRB Site #1305). The Clairemont Historic Context Statement will aid City staff, property owners, developers, and community members in the future identification, evaluation, and preservation of significant historical resources in the community.

EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION

Preservation, revitalization and adaptive reuse of historic buildings and districts conserves resources, utilizes existing infrastructure, generates local jobs and purchasing, supports small business development and heritage tourism, enhances quality of life, and contributes to a vibrant, dynamic community. In addition, preservation of extant historic resources and education and interpretation of both extant resources and past resources that may have been lost contribute to a community's identity and sense of place.

To better inform and educate the public on the history of their community, the merits of historic preservation, and the direct and indirect benefits of preservation, information about the development of the community, the resources themselves, and the purpose and objectives of a preservation program must be developed and made widely accessible.



North Clairemont Library, located at 4616 Clairemont Drive, designed by Architect Robert J. Plat in 1960. (Credit: San Diego History Center)

POLICIES

- 9.1

Conduct project-specific Native American consultation early in the development review process to ensure culturally appropriate and adequate treatment and mitigation for significant archaeological sites with cultural or religious significance to the Native American community in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations and guidelines.
- 9.2

Conduct project-specific investigations in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations to identify potentially significant tribal cultural and archaeological resources.
- 9.3

Avoid adverse impacts to significant archaeological and tribal cultural resources identified within development project sites and implement measures to protect the resources from future disturbance to the extent feasible.
- 9.4

Minimize adverse impacts and perform mitigation under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist and a Native American Kumeyaay monitor if archaeological and tribal cultural resources cannot be entirely avoided.
- 9.5

Consider eligible for listing on the City's Historical Resources Register any significant archaeological or Native American tribal cultural sites that may be identified as part of future development within Clairemont and refer sites for designation as appropriate.
- 9.6

Identify and evaluate properties within Clairemont for potential historic significance, and preserve those found to be significant under local, state or federal designation criteria.
- 9.7

Prioritize consideration to the properties identified in the Study List contained in the Clairemont Community Planning Area Historic Context Statement.
- 9.8

Utilizing the Historic Context Statement and Modernism Context Statement survey for the Contemporary style commercial and public buildings and consider establishment of a multiple property listing for such resources.
- 9.9

Consider the preparation of a Reconnaissance Survey of the Community Planning Area based upon the Clairemont Community Planning Area Historic Context Statement to assist in the identification of potential historical resources, including districts and individually eligible resources, along with areas eligible for historic exemption based on shared development history.
- Resource Preservation
- 9.10

Promote opportunities for education and interpretation of Clairemont's unique history and historic resources through mobile technology; brochures; walking tours; interpretative signs, markers, displays, exhibits; and art. Encourage the inclusion of both extant and non-extant resources.

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