

1. Historic Preservation Element -

Goals

- Identification and preservation of significant and important historical resources in the College Area community.
- Provision of educational opportunities and incentives related to historical resources.

Introduction

Historic Preservation is guided by the General Plan for the preservation, protection, restoration, and rehabilitation of historical and cultural resources throughout the city. This element provides a summary of the prehistory and history of the community and establishes policies to support the identification and preservation of its historical, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources. More detailed historical narratives are provided within a Historic Context Statement and a Cultural Resources Report, which were prepared to assist property owners, developers, consultants, community members, and City staff in the identification and preservation of historical, archaeological, and tribal cultural resources within the College Area Community planning area.

Vision

This Community Plan envisions a quality built and natural environment enriched by the identification and preservation of significant

and important historical resources within the community. It is also the intent of this Element to improve the quality of the built environment, encourage the appreciation for the City's history and culture, enhance community identity, and contribute to the City's economic vitality through historic preservation.

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 College Area 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 in 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.

Two indigenous groups are described from the ethnohistoric period as inhabiting San Diego County: the Luiseño and the Kumeyaay. The present-day boundaries of the City of San Diego, including the College Area, are part of the ancestral homeland and unceded territory of the Yuman-speaking Kumeyaay, which stretched approximately from the Pacific Ocean to the west, El Centro to the east, Escondido to the north, and the northern part of Baja California, Mexico to the south. The Kumeyaay traditionally lived in small, semi-permanent, politically autonomous seasonal camping spots or villages, often located near local springs and water sources. Larger villages were located in river valleys and along the shoreline of coastal estuaries. Houses were typically made with tule or California bulrush.

Subsistence cycles were seasonal and generally focused on an east-west or coast-to-desert route based around the availability of vegetal foods, while hunting and shellfish harvesting added a secondary food source to gathering practices. The Kumeyaay migrated to the mountains during certain seasons of the year to harvest acorns and grain grasses, as well as to trade with neighboring tribes to the east. At the time of Spanish colonization in the late 1700s, several major Kumeyaay camps were in proximity to the College Area community. The closest was Nipaquay, located along the north side of the San Diego River at the present-day location of the San Diego Mission de Alcalá. The general route of today's Kumeyaay Highway (Interstate 8), which forms the northern boundary of the College Area community follows the route of historic waterways through Alvarado Canyon and was one route used by the Kumeyaay to travel between the coast and the interior.

Estimates for the population of the Kumeyaay vary substantially: Scholars speculate anywhere from 3,000 to 19,000 people lived in the region prior to the establishment of the Spanish missions in

1769. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the Kumeyaay population had dwindled to a few thousand, with many living on reservation lands.



Kumeyaay Woman in San Diego County. Edward Curtis Collection, Library of Congress

Early San Diego History

The division of land, creation of plans and associated settlements in San Diego began with the establishment of the Franciscan mission and the Spanish Presidio of San Diego in 1769. Although Spanish explorer Juan Cabrillo landed in San Diego in 1542, colonization began in 1769 with the onset of European settlement. An expedition led by Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra established a presidio and the first Mission San Diego de Alcalá – the first in the chain of 21 missions in Alta California. The site was located near the Kumeyaay village of Cosoy on what is known as Presidio Hill in present-day Old Town San Diego. The mission, the presidio (fort) along with the pueblo (town) encompassed the three major institutions used by Spain to extend its borders and consolidate its colonial territories. The mission settlements were founded to assimilate the indigenous populations into Spanish culture and the Catholic religion and relied on the forced labor of Native Americans. In 1774, the

mission was relocated eastward to its present-day location in Mission Valley.

After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, the mission and presidio systems declined. In the 1830s, the Mexican government began secularization of the Spanish missions and disposition of church lands under the rancho system as well as establishment of a civilian pueblo in San Diego. The Ex-Mission Rancho de San Diego de Alcalá included present-day neighborhoods in the College Area and was granted to Santiago Argüello in 1845. During this period, land within the College Area was likely used for cattle ranching, but no built structures were recorded.

In 1846, United States forces occupied San Diego during the Mexican-American War, and with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the city officially became part of the United States. San Diego grew slowly until the 1860s when land speculator Alonzo Erastus Horton developed Horton's Addition, shifting the city's commercial center from Old Town to present-day downtown San Diego. The Ex-Mission Rancho remained east of the city's early development. Legal confirmation of ownership in 1876 allowed for the sale of portions of the rancho, leading to the early development of land within the College Area beyond livestock grazing.

Historic Development Themes

The College Area community's formative development history is encapsulated by the following development periods and themes, including association with San Diego State University and a suburban residential and business expansion boom.

Agricultural Development (1881-1931)

The City of San Diego experienced a boom period from 1885 to 1888 that was the result of the completion of the Santa Fe Railroad which ultimately connected San Diego to the southern transcontinental railroad. With

increased access to markets, San Diego experienced a period of rapid growth and faced pressure to find additional water sources. The San Diego Flume Company formed in 1886 to export water from the Cuyamaca Mountains. The company purchased land stretching from the eastern edge of San Diego to the Cuyamaca Mountains and constructed Cuyamaca Dam and a 37-mile-long open flume to transport the water.

The present-day College Area was located about six miles east of the San Diego city limits in the 1880s and was part of the San Diego Flume Company's "La Mesa Colony" subdivision. The La Mesa Colony subdivision included 5- and 10-acre irregularly shaped parcels for agricultural use encircling a planned townsite with a typical rectilinear street grid and regular parcels. The historic street grid is currently part of 18 rectilinear blocks in the vicinity of El Cajon Boulevard and 70th Street. La Mesa Colony and the nearby settlements of La Mesa and Lemon Grove were promoted for their warm climate ideal for citrus, avocado growing, and poultry farms. Although La Mesa developed a flourishing citrus industry, the La Mesa Colony faced economic challenges largely due to limited local water sources and the San Diego Flume Company's inability to deliver promised water.



Flume to transport water to San Diego from Cuyamaca Mountains, 1905, City of San Diego City Clerk's Archive

Early Residential Development (1886-1945)

The city's expansion eastward, marked by annexations and the concept of "Greater San Diego," influenced the College Area's development as a residential community. Greater San Diego was a slogan and approach by which the City of San Diego would expand its boundaries by incorporating established communities just outside its borders. San Diego annexed the nearby community of East San Diego in 1923 placing the present-day College Area just outside the city limits. Residential development of land within the College Area did not occur until the 1920s, and the earliest subdivision activity of the 1920s was located at the south and southwestern edges of the College Area that were closer to El Cajon Boulevard (then called El Cajon Avenue). The La Mesa Colony was annexed to The City of San Diego in the late 1920s.

Notable subdivisions like Redland Gardens emerged in the 1920s, marketed to buyers interested in a "back-to-the-farm" movement which was a popular element of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and small-scale personal farming reflected the community's agricultural setting. However, home construction proceeded at a gradual pace. Additional subdivisions followed in the mid-1920s. Despite the Great Depression, home construction expanded through the 1930s, aided by relocation of San Diego State Teachers College campus to its present-day San Diego State University site in 1931.

By 1942, the 1920s subdivisions had filled with new homes, predominantly featuring the new Minimal Traditional architectural style of this period. The City's zoning system, introduced in the 1930s, designated some of the College Area for single-family homes. Properties fronting El Cajon Boulevard and a portion of College Avenue were zoned commercial. This zoning pattern laid the groundwork for post-World War II suburban

expansion, marking a pivotal era in the College Area's development.

Despite the construction downturn during the Great Depression, the area steadily built out through the 1930s, likely in part due to the relocation of San Diego State University to this area in 1931 along with the City's continued outward growth. The area also benefitted from "New Deal" federal programs created under the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration to stimulate the economy during the Great Depression. The area received favorable Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) ratings, facilitating agency-backed mortgages. The HOLC was created to refinance delinquent home mortgages to prevent foreclosure, as well as to expand home buying opportunities. The HOLC survey assigned grades to residential neighborhoods in cities throughout the country. The HOLC survey map of 1936 shows most of the present-day College Area as undeveloped or identified as "Sparsely Settled." The area comprising the newer El Cerrito and Redlands Gardens subdivisions along El Cajon Bl. west of College Ave received the grades of "A" and "B", the highest of the four grades. The area east of College Ave comprising the older La Mesa Colony subdivision received a lower "C" rating.

Commercial Development (1910-1974)

The Commercial Development theme spans the period from approximately 1910 to 1974 and is concentrated along major streets. The historical significance of El Cajon Avenue, initially a dirt road connecting San Diego to eastern settlements, evolved with the advent of the personal automobile. Competing bids in 1912 between San Diego and Los Angeles for the western terminus of the interstate highway from Arizona resulted in an automobile race between the two cities and Phoenix, Arizona. After a San Diego driver won, El Cajon Avenue became the official terminus of future highway 80, fostering San

Diego's eastward expansion and catalyzing development in the present-day College Area. Paving along portions of El Cajon Avenue started after the announcement of the 1915 Panama–California Exposition. However, development resulting from the popularity of the exposition was focused just east of the then city limits and did not reach the College Area.

The widening and renaming of El Cajon Avenue to El Cajon Boulevard in 1937 marked official acknowledgment of the street's significance as a major east-west auto thoroughfare and major entrance to the city. The 1930s saw an increase in businesses along El Cajon Boulevard, including gas stations, repair shops, and lodging facilities. By 1950, El Cajon Boulevard had developed a distinct commercial character further characterized by auto-oriented tourist courts, motels, and drive-thru commercial buildings.

The construction of Alvarado Canyon Road into Mission Valley changed traffic patterns and resulted in the gradual decommissioning of Highway 80 along El Cajon Boulevard between 1964 and 1974. The intersection of College Avenue and Montezuma Road witnessed varied commercial development by 1974, transitioning from primarily residential to small-scale commercial buildings. Overall, the history of commercial development in the College Area reflects the evolving transportation landscape, from wagon routes to highways, influencing the growth and character of the region.

Development Created by the College (1931-1974)

Initiated by the relocation of the San Diego State Teachers College in the late 1920s, the College Area gained its name from this significant move. Despite exemptions from city planning regulations, the presence of the College (renamed San Diego State

University in 1974) became a catalyst for the area's development.

The 1930s marked a crucial period with the College's expansion, notably through the construction of Spanish Colonial Revival-style buildings designed by Howard Spencer Hazen the senior architect of the California Division of the State Architect. Works Progress Administration (WPA) funding further facilitated development, adding Scripps Cottage, the Student's Club, the Dual Gymnasium, and the Aztec Bowl. Renamed San Diego State College in 1935, the institution experienced steady growth, expanding its footprint south, east, and west.

The aftermath of World War II brought challenges in student housing, prompting temporary housing solutions such as trailers and army surplus buildings as well as university-initiated outreach programs seeking community support and encouraging residents to offer living spaces. The narrative underscores growing student enrollment and the struggle to meet student housing demand, which became a pressing issue in the postwar era.

The 1950s witnessed a development shift with the construction of the first on-campus dormitories and the emergence of tract homes within the community under the City's zoning regulations. The growth of San Diego State University continued in the 1960s, prompting city planning initiatives like the 1964 Area Plan, which addressed housing shortages and suggested zoning adjustments for multi-family housing near the campus. Subsequent plans, such as the 1974 State University Area Plan, emphasized additional multi-family housing and considered the impact of the university's expansion on traffic and parking.

Postwar Residential Development (1945-1974)

The period from 1945 to 1974 marked a significant transformation in the College

Area's development, with a predominant focus on single-family tract homes. This era witnessed significant growth as well as a shift from piecemeal development to large-scale housing tracts. Previously constrained areas such as steep hillsides began to develop, and growth stemmed from both infill development and new subdivision tracts.

Post-World War II, San Diego, like the rest of the nation, saw an upsurge in residential development to address housing shortages. Federal housing policies and financial programs facilitated large-scale projects, altering the traditional role of developers. The Housing Act of 1949 incentivized developers to build multiple houses using stock plans, resulting in the creation of suburbs with nearly identical homes. Subdivision maps filed in the 1950s reflect extensive growth in the community by various developers. Notable developers included Dennstedt Company, Chris Cosgrove, Dass Construction, Harmony Homes, and Brock Construction.

The 1950s also saw the rise of unique developments, such as Alvarado Estates, originally a cooperative housing development catering to San Diego State University employees and small aircraft owners due to the inclusion of an airstrip. The community developed in phases and featured custom homes designed by notable architects in a variety of architectural styles, including Mid-Century Modern and Ranch. College View Estates Units 1 and 2 started construction in 1954 as a higher-end tract development, offering standard tract plans as well as semi-custom homes designed by notable architects.

Toward the late 1960s, townhouse and multi-family apartment developments were constructed as infill developments on remaining, undeveloped land. Responding to the relative scarcity of raw land, these developments often catered to smaller households and featured distinct design

aesthetics. Several of these developments were located along the periphery of the community along Collwood Boulevard and Alvarado Road. Overall, the postwar residential development in the College Area reflects a dynamic period of growth, responding to national housing trends, federal policies, and the evolving needs of the San Diego State University community.

Civic and Institutional Development (1931-1974)

During the period from 1931 to 1974, the College Area experienced significant local civic and institutional development in response to its growing residential population. The construction and establishment of civic, institutional, and religious buildings played a crucial role in shaping the community.

In the early 1930s, recognizing the need for community safety, a fire station was proposed, and by 1935, a small fire station was built at the corner of College and Adams avenues. Houses of worship were also erected during the 1930s to early 1940s, with notable examples including Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, College Park Presbyterian Church (now Faith Presbyterian Church), College Lutheran Church, and the College Avenue Baptist Church complex. Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, established in 1938, expanded in 1961 to accommodate a growing congregation. The College Avenue Baptist Church, founded in 1891, constructed a new church building in 1940 and further expanded in 1947-48 and 1951 to meet the needs of its members. In 1966, a new church building designed by architect Kenneth Wing was erected, capable of seating 1,500 congregants.

The community also witnessed the construction of schools to address the growing population. John Muir Elementary School (Now Harriet Tubman Village Charter

School) underwent modernization in 1940, while Montezuma Elementary School (now Language Academy Elementary) and Hardy Elementary School were built in 1951 and 1957, respectively.

Additionally, a unique use of the northwestern part of the College Area was the establishment of a Jehovah's Witness-organized compound named "Beth Shan" in 1939. This compound, located in what is now Alvarado Estates, was acquired for its proximity to the residence of Joseph Rutherford, a prominent figure in the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Beth Shan served as a discrete compound until 1945.

In the 1960s, there was a notable growth of medical facilities at the northern end of College Avenue, with the establishment of the San Diego Professional Association and the construction of the Alvarado Medical Center in 1960. This marked a shift in regional travel from El Cajon Boulevard to the I-8 Highway, and the medical facilities became a significant development in the area.

Overall, the period was characterized by a dynamic interplay between the growing residential population and the construction of civic, institutional, and religious structures to meet the evolving needs of the College Area community.

Resource Preservation

A Historic Context Statement and Cultural Resources Report were prepared during the process of updating the Community Plan. The cultural resources report describes the tribal cultural history (pre-contact/protohistoric and pre-history) in the community, identifies significant archaeological resources at a broad level, guides 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 the College area and the property types associated with those themes. The Historic Context Statement aids City staff, property owners, developers, and community members in the future identification, evaluation, and preservation of significant historical resources in the community. These documents have been used to inform the policies and recommendations of the Community Plan.

Policies

- 9.1** Conduct project-specific Native American tribal 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** Ensure measures are taken to minimize adverse impacts and are performed 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 the College Area and refer sites for designation as appropriate.

- 9.6** Identify and evaluate properties for potential historic significance, and preserve those found to be significant under local, state, or federal designation criteria.
- 9.7** Prioritized consideration to the properties identified in the Study List contained in the College Area Community Planning Area Historic Context Statement.

- 9.8** Complete a historic survey of the community based upon the Historic Context Statement to assist in the identification of potential historical resources, including historic districts and individually eligible resources.

- 9.9** Promote opportunities for education and interpretation of the College Area's unique history and historic resources through mobile technology; brochures; walking tours; interpretative signs, markers, displays, exhibits; and art.

- 9.10** Encourage the inclusion of both extant and non-extant resources.