



The College Area Historic Context Statement

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Prepared for
San Diego City Planning Department



College Area Historic Context Statement
City of San Diego

Cover Photos, Clockwise From Top Left:

1. The College Area in 1934, looking south, after San Diego State College constructed its new campus (foreground). Source: OP 12323-503, San Diego History Center.
2. Intersection of El Cajon Boulevard (running east-west in the foreground) and College Avenue (running north) in 1948. Source: AE-1948-10, University Archives Photograph Collection, Courtesy of Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University Library & Information Access.
3. Aerial view of College Area around 1963. Source: Flight CAS-SD, Frame 5-53, 1963-1964. Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection.
4. The College Area in 1953, looking south, as postwar tract housing transforms the area. Source: OP 12423-504, San Diego History Center

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Executive Summary

The City of San Diego (City) undertook this Historic Context Statement as part of the comprehensive update to the College Area Community Plan. A goal of the citywide General Plan is integration of historic preservation planning into the larger planning process. The College Area Community Plan Update will consider community conditions as well as General Plan and the Climate Action Plan goals to form a community-specific vision and goals to guide future long-term development of the community. In March of 2021, the City of San Diego (City) contracted with Page & Turnbull through Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT) to prepare this historic context statement. This historic context statement focuses on built environment themes and excludes the evaluation of themes relevant to archaeological or tribal cultural resources.

Document Organization

This historic context statement is organized into the following sections:

- ✦ **Executive Summary** provides information regarding the commissioning of the historic context statement, the organization of the document, and a summary of its findings.
- ✦ **How to Use this Document** describes the purpose of a historic context statement, what it is and is not intended to do, and how the document will be used by the City in planning and implementation activities.
- ✦ **Process of Evaluating a Resource** describes the process by which a resource is identified, evaluated, and determined eligible or ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and the San Diego Register of Historical Resources. The concept of integrity is also discussed.
- ✦ **Project Overview and Methods** describes the context in which the historic context statement was commissioned, the study area, and the methods used to prepare the historic context statement, including research design and public outreach.
- ✦ **Historic Context** provides a broad-brush historical overview of the overarching forces that have shaped land use patterns and development of the built environment of the area under consideration through several themes. Each theme includes associated property types identified, the eligibility standards that should guide evaluation and listing of specific properties, and a study list of properties that may have a significant association with the theme.

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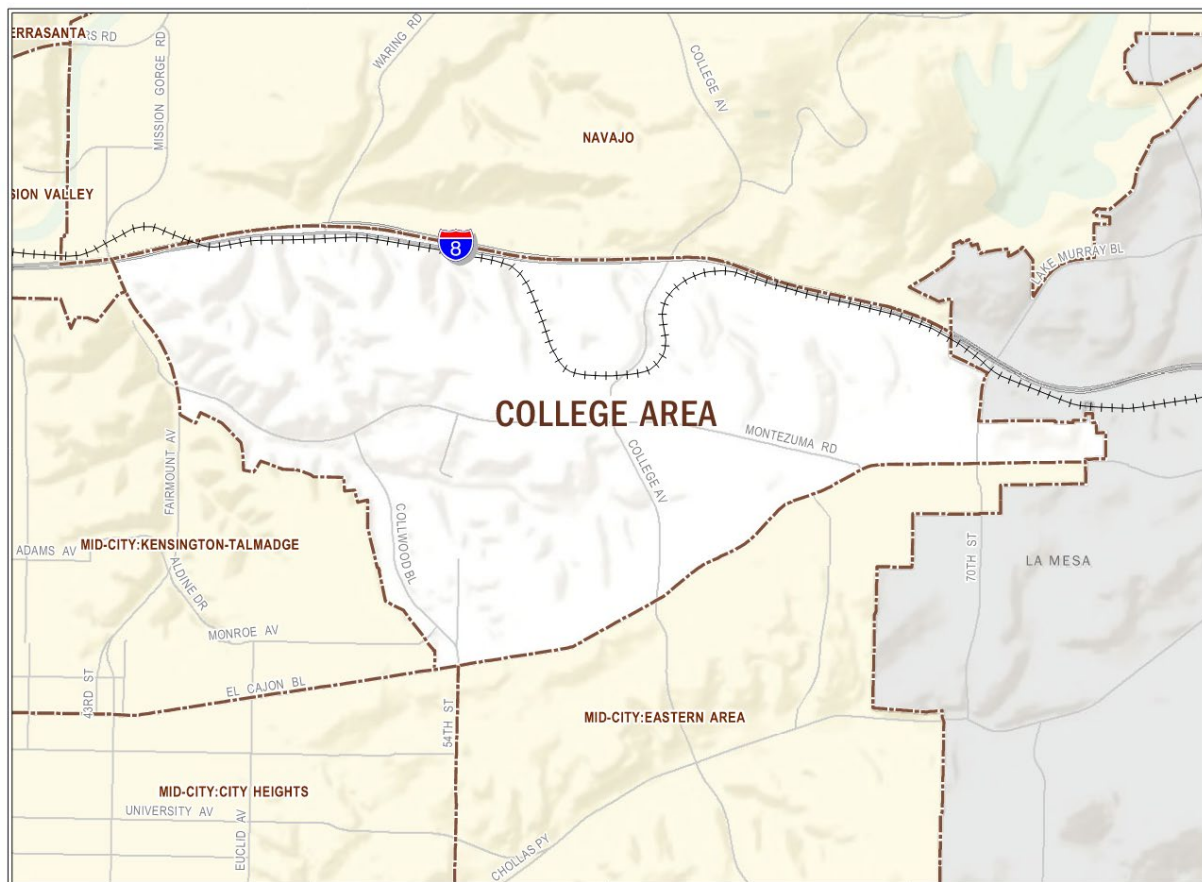
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- ✦ **Preservation Goals and Priorities** outlines and prioritizes recommended preservation activities and methods for identifying, evaluating, and treating the property types identified as significant within each theme or context.
- ✦ **Selected Bibliography** lists the major sources of information for this historic context statement. Additional sources used for specific quotes or subjects are cited in the text using footnotes.

Project Overview and Methods

Project Area and Scope

In support of the comprehensive update to the College Area Community Plan and the associated Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), a Historic Context Statement addressing the themes and property types significant to the development of the College Area community (from the earliest development through 1974) was prepared.



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Jan 2012

Figure 1. College Area Community Plan boundaries. Source: SanGIS, January 2021.

The College Area Community Plan area (College Area CPA) is located in the central part of the City of San Diego along the southern rim of Mission Valley.¹ It is approximately eight miles from downtown. The plan area boundaries are defined by Interstate 8 (I-8, Kumeyaay Highway) along the north, which runs within Alvarado Canyon, El Cajon Boulevard to the south, the city's eastern boundaries with the City of La Mesa on the east, and at the west, the northern part of Fairmount Avenue and the natural canyon and ravine west of Montezuma Road and Collwood Boulevard that separates College Area from the Kensington-Talmadge Community Plan Area (Figure 1).

This Historic Context Statement provides the foundation for possible future reconnaissance or intensive-level surveys; facilitates the preparation of the historical overview of the College Area community in the PEIR; indicates the likelihood of encountering historic resources within the community; and guides the future identification and designation of such resources. The College Area Historic Context Statement is a built environment study and will not address pre-history or archaeological resources, which will be addressed in a separate Cultural Resources Constraints Analyses.

Scope of the Historic Context Statement

The College Area Historic Context Statement is arranged by thematic sections in roughly chronological order during the American Period, which starts in 1846 with the United States forces in San Diego during the Mexican-American War and ends in 1974 when the College Area was mostly developed and the 1974 State University Area Plan was in place to direct subsequent growth and development. The period under study reflects the period of built environment development evident in the College Area CPA. A brief overview of the pre-contact, Spanish, and Mexican periods preceding the American Period is provided for overall context and not intended to serve as adequate reference for surveying resources related to these periods.²

The six themes follow the general outline of the area's development from an agricultural community to a predominately residential one. While the themes are arranged generally chronologically, there are overlaps. The periods of significance for the themes end by 1974, when College Area is fully developed and the area was the subject of a 1974 Area Plan that defined the area with nearly the same boundaries as used today.

¹ "Community Profiles: College Area," City of San Diego Planning Department, accessed June 22, 2021, <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/profiles/collegearea>.

² Among the recommendations in the Preservation Goals and Priorities sections is one to develop the tools to understand and survey potential resources related to each of these periods.

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The themes consist of:

- Agricultural Development (1881-1931)
- Early Residential Development (1886-1945)
- Commercial Development (1881-1974)
- Development Created by the College (1931-1974)
- Postwar Residential Development (1945-1974)
- Civic and Institutional Development (1931-1974)

Following each theme is a summary of the various property types and architectural styles associated with each period of development and defines specific eligibility standards for assessing historical significance and integrity. Study Lists also have been included under each theme to aid in the identification and evaluation of properties within the College Area CPA. Properties in these Study Lists should be evaluated as needed in the future to determine whether they are significant; however, their inclusion in a Study List does not mean that these properties have been determined significant by this study. Likewise, properties not included in these Study Lists may nevertheless be eligible for designation and should be evaluated if it appears that the property could be significant under one or more of the City's Designation Criteria.

Methods

This historic context statement was prepared through a combination of field and desk-based surveys, as well as primary and secondary source research. A historic resource survey was not undertaken as part of this context statement.

Research and Literature Review

Research was collected from various local repositories and online sources, including the San Diego Planning Department, San Diego City Clerk's Digital Archives Collection, San Diego History Center's online archive of *The Journal of San Diego History* and other publications, San Diego Union-Tribune Historical Archive, UC Santa Barbara Library's FrameFinder aerial photography collection (UCSB Geospatial Collection), the digital collections of the Sanborn Map Company, the U.S. Geological Survey's historic topographic map collection, subdivision maps of the San Diego County Survey Records System, and HistoricAerials.com. City planning staff provided additional reference materials. For consistency, many of the architectural styles referenced are based on definitions available in other City of San Diego historic context statements, including the *San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement*.

Restrictions related to COVID-19 limited the ability to conduct in-person research at local repositories and archives. Research was requested through the San Diego History Center,

whose staff photographed archival information about College Area's 1920s subdivisions, and maps and photographs of the La Mesa Colony area.

Field Survey Efforts

Page & Turnbull staff conducted a windshield field survey of the College Area CPA in June 2021 to understand the area's built resources. Prior to the field work, staff identified specific locations to visit based on the research conducted, recommendations from City planning staff, and where potential resources related to the themes may exist. These included areas with clusters of older building stock, including residences in the La Mesa Colony area, the 1920s subdivisions on the north side of El Cajon Boulevard, and the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company's College Park tract, as well as the postwar residential developments in the northwest corner of the CPA. Areas with similar building stock, such as tract housing or townhome developments, were also identified as locations to visit to understand their character. The known subdivision tracts were outlined in Google Maps and used in the field to note where changes occurred.

The survey team drove or walked through most of the plan area, including along the north side of El Cajon Boulevard. City planning staff connected the survey team with José Reynoso, a resident in Alvarado Estates who facilitated access to the gated community. The San Diego State University campus was not visited as part of the field survey as the City does not have land use jurisdiction over State educational properties and a portion of the campus is documented in a National Register of Historic Places listing. Contemporary photographs in this report are from the field work unless otherwise noted.

The historic context statement was completed under the guidance of City of San Diego Planning Department's Heritage Preservation staff. Page & Turnbull staff who prepared this context statement meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications for Architectural History, Historic Preservation, and/or Historic Architecture, including Ruth Todd as Principal, Flora Chou as Cultural Resources Planner and project manager, and Clare Flynn and Barrett Reiter as Architectural Historians.

Designated Historic Resources in Project Area

The College Area CPA has the following resources already designated at the time of this study.

Address	Resource Name	Designation Criteria	Building Type
4431 Palo Verde Terrace	Warren and Elleene Wright/John Mortenson House	Local: C/D	Residential

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Address	Resource Name	Designation Criteria	Building Type
4449 Yerba Santa Drive	Bond House	Local: C/D	Residential
4545 Yerba Santa Drive	John and Betty Mabee/William Lumpkins House	Local: C/D	Residential
4603 56 th Street	Erby and Mabel Deputy House	Local: C	Residential
4643 El Cerrito Drive	Baron X. Kouch & Norma Meyer Schuh Spec House #2	Local: C	Residential
Not4777 Avion Way	Eason Enterprises/Cliff May Spec House #1	Local: C/D	Residential
5120 Norris Street	Martin and Enid Gleich/Henry Hester House	Local: C/D	Residential
5300 Campanile Drive	San Diego State College	National Register	University
5330 Le Barron Road	George and Iris Goodman House	Local: C	Residential
5471 Madison Avenue	Ernest and Thelma McGowan Spec House #1	Local: C	Residential
5602 Adams Avenue	Reuben Quartermass/ Charles O. Stensrud House & Carriage House	Local: A/B/C	Residential

Summary of Findings

The six themes in this Historic Context Statement reflect the broad and varied development pattern of the College Area CPA. The presence of San Diego State University, starting in 1931, was one of the factors, along with greater national and local events. As a result, a wide variety of historic resources may be present, from former agricultural properties toward the east end of the plan area related to the San Diego Flume Company and its “La Mesa Colony” from the late 19th century, through to individual architect-design homes in several postwar subdivisions as well as formulaic designs common in postwar tract housing. Among the recommendations are to conduct a survey of the plan area to identify eligible historic resources related to these themes, as well as additional research into over 50 subdivisions that can help further narrow the scope of any survey.

How to Use This Document

The College Area Historic Context Statement identifies development patterns and property types within the Community Plan Area. It is intended to be used as a tool to better understand and evaluate the significance of the area’s potential historic resources.

Purpose

A historic context statement is a specialized document with specific content requirements that support the purpose of the document: to serve as the foundation for the identification, evaluation, designation, and future treatment of historical resources.³

“Historic context statements are intended to provide an analytical framework for identifying and evaluating resources by focusing on and concisely explaining what aspects of geography, history and culture significantly shaped the physical development of a community or region’s land use patterns and built environment over time, what important property types were associated with those developments, why they are important, and what characteristics they need to have to be considered an important representation of their type and context.”⁴

It is not uncommon for people to expect a historic context statement to thoroughly research and address every aspect of its subject matter in an all-encompassing narrative history. However, it is important to understand that historic context statements “are not intended to

³ U.S. Department of the Interior, “National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” 53.

⁴ Nelson, “Writing Historic Contexts,” 1–2.

be a chronological recitation of a community's significant historical events or noteworthy citizens or a comprehensive community history.⁵" Instead, historic context statements identify the historical themes important to the development of the existing built environment and the property types that represent those themes, and then provide guidance regarding the characteristics a particular property must have to represent an important theme and be a good example of a property type that may be eligible for designation. For more information on what a historic context statement is and is not in general, refer to "Writing Historic Contexts," by Marie Nelson of the State Office of Historic Preservation.

The overriding goal of this context statement is to distill much of what we know about the evolution and development of the College Area, and to help establish why a particular place may be considered historically significant within one or more themes. It is intended to be used as a starting point for determining whether or not a specific property is eligible for designation as a historical resource under a national, state, or local designation program. It is important to note that this historic context statement is intended to be a living document that will change and evolve over time in response to information resulting from surveys, individual resource evaluations, and future research by others.

This historic context statement did not include a survey component to identify potential resources that are associated with the themes in this document. However, properties that may represent the important themes and property types identified in this historic context statement did present themselves while researching and preparing this document. In order to capture this information for future research and analysis, Study Lists are provided with each theme. A property's inclusion in a Study List is merely an indication of a possible significant association that should be explored and does not mean that the property is designated or even presumed to be significant. Likewise, a property's exclusion from a Study List simply means that the property did not come up while researching this document and does not mean that the property is not associated with the theme or ineligible for designation. It is important to remember that this document does not make eligibility determinations for any potentially important properties. Instead, it presents the information necessary to evaluate properties for significance and integrity on a case-by-case basis and may be used to guide certain aspects of city planning.

Use in City Planning and Implementation

The information in this historic context statement will guide the future identification, evaluation, designation, and treatment of historical resources associated with the themes

⁵ Nelson, 1.

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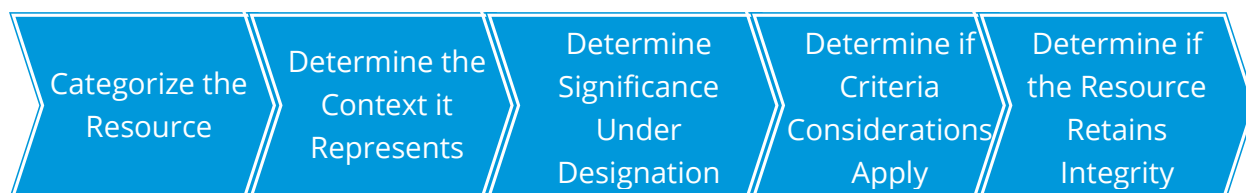
identified herein. This document may be utilized by the City for the following planning and implementation activities:

- ✦ To inform short and long-term work program goals and priorities.
- ✦ To guide future surveys intended to identify the location of individual resources and concentrations of resources that may represent the themes and property types identified in this context statement.
- ✦ To guide land use planning efforts.
- ✦ To provide the foundation for environmental analysis of related resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when applicable.
- ✦ As the basis for a local Multiple Property Listing (MPL).
- ✦ To evaluate individual properties associated with the themes and property types identified in this context statement as part of:
 - ▶ a permit application impacting a building 45 years old or older; or
 - ▶ a nomination for individual historical resource designation.

In addition to providing guidance and an analytical framework for City staff, the City's Historical Resources Board, and historic preservation professionals and consultants, it is hoped that the information contained in this historic context statement will inspire property owners and members of the community to nominate places which they think are important for formal designation.

Process of Evaluating a Resource

This historic context statement will assist in the identification and evaluation of resources eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), and the City of San Diego's Historic Register of Historical Resources (SDRHR). The criteria under which a historical resource may be designated varies slightly across the NRHP, CRHR and SDRHR; however, the overall process by which a resource is evaluated and determined eligible or ineligible for listing on one of these registers is consistent.



This process includes categorizing the resource, determining which pre-historic or historic context the resource represents, determining whether the resource is significant within that context under the applicable designation criteria, determining whether any criteria considerations or other special considerations apply, and lastly determining whether the resource retains integrity required to convey its significance.⁶

Categorizing the Resource

Historical resources are tangible, physical resources that are generally fixed in location and may be categorized either as buildings, structures, objects, sites, or districts.⁷ Small groupings of resources are listed under a single category using the primary resource. For example, a house with a garage and fountain would be categorized by the house (building).

- ✦ **Buildings** are created principally to shelter any form of human activity. Examples of buildings include but are not limited to houses, apartment buildings, hotels, commercial and office buildings, theaters, churches, schools, post office, government buildings, garages, stables, and sheds.
- ✦ **Structures** are functional constructions made usually for purposes other than creating human shelter. Examples of structures include but are not limited to bridges,

⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior, "National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," 3.

⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, 4-5.

highways, dams, tunnels, earthwork, boats and ships, aircraft, automobiles, trolley cars, gazebos, and fences.

- ✦ **Objects** are constructions that are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed. Although it may be, by nature or design, movable, an object is associated with a specific setting or environment. Examples of objects include but are not limited to fountains, sculptures, statuary, monuments, and mileposts.
- ✦ **Sites** are the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure. Examples of sites include but are not limited to designed landscapes, natural features (such as a rock formation) having cultural significance, trails, cemeteries, ruins of a building or structure, habitation sites, and village sites.
- ✦ **Districts** are a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district derives its importance from being a unified entity, even though it is often composed of a wide variety of resources that may represent different categories. Districts contain contributing resources that convey the significance of the district and non-contributing resources that do not, either due to lack of integrity or lack of association with the context and period of significance.

Determining the Historic Context

The significance of a historic property can be judged and explained only when it is evaluated within its historic context. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear... The core premise of a historic context is that resources, properties, or happenings in history do not occur in a vacuum but rather are part of larger trends or patterns.⁸

There are five steps required to determine whether a property is significant within its historic context, which are described in detail in National Register Bulletin #15. In summary, the steps are as follows:

⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, 7.

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1. Determine the facet of history of the local area, State, or the nation that the property represents;
2. Determine whether that facet of history is significant;
3. Determine whether it is a type of property that has relevance and importance in illustrating the historic context;
4. Determine how the property illustrates that history; and
5. Determine whether the property possesses the physical features necessary to convey the aspect of prehistory or history with which it is associated.

This historic context statement identifies the significant themes and property types associated with the College Area and provides the framework with which to evaluate a property within this context and apply the applicable designation criteria.

Determining Significance Under Applicable Designation Criteria

A historical resource may be listed at the federal, state, or local level provided that it meets at least one designation criterion from the applicable registration program and retains integrity. A summary of each of the registration programs and their designation criteria is provided below. Although the criteria used by the different programs vary in their specifics, they focus on many of the same general themes. In general, a resource need only meet one criterion to be considered historically significant.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

The NRHP is "an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the nation's cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment."⁹

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a property must be at least 50 years of age unless the property is of "exceptional importance," (see information on Criteria Considerations in the following section) and possess significance in American history and culture, architecture, or archaeology. A property of potential significance must meet one or more of the following four established criteria:¹⁰

⁹ Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 60.2.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, "National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," 2.

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. Embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Yield, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)

The CRHR is "the authoritative guide to the state's significant historical and archeological resources."¹¹

To be eligible for listing in the California Register, a property must be at least 50 years of age (unless the property is of "exceptional importance," see information on Criteria Consideration G below) and possess significance in American history and culture, architecture, or archaeology. A property of potential significance must meet one or more of the following four established criteria:

- 1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- 2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
- 3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.
- 4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

As described further below, the following CEQA statutes and CEQA Guidelines are of relevance to the analysis of archaeological, historic, and tribal cultural resources:

¹¹ California Office of Historic Preservation, "California Register of Historical Resources."

- California Public Resources Code Section 21083.2(g) defines “unique archaeological resource.”
- California Public Resources Code Section 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a) define “historical resources.” In addition, CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b) defines the phrase “substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource.” It also defines the circumstances when a project would materially impair the significance of an historical resource.
- California Public Resources Code Section 21074(a) defines “tribal cultural resources.”
- California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e) set forth standards and steps to be employed following the accidental discovery of human remains in any location other than a dedicated cemetery.
- California Public Resources Code Sections 21083.2(b)-(c) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4 provide information regarding the mitigation framework for archaeological and historic resources, including examples of preservation-in-place mitigation measures; preservation-in-place is the preferred manner of mitigating impacts to significant archaeological sites because it maintains the relationship between artifacts and the archaeological context and may also help avoid conflict with religious or cultural values of groups associated with the archaeological site(s).

More specifically, under CEQA, a project may have a significant effect on the environment if it may cause “a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource” (California Public Resources Code Section 21084.1; CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b).) If a site is either listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR, or if it is included in a local register of historic resources or identified as significant in a historical resources survey (meeting the requirements of California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1(q)), it is a “historical resource” and is presumed to be historically or culturally significant for purposes of CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21084.1; CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a)). The lead agency is not precluded from determining that a resource is a historical resource even if it does not fall within this presumption (California Public Resources Code Section 21084.1; CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a)).

1. A “substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource” reflecting a significant effect under CEQA means “physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(1); California Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(q)). In turn, CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5(b)(2) states the significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project: Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse

manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for, inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources; or

2. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or its identification in an historical resources survey meeting the requirements of section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or
3. Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.

Pursuant to these sections, the CEQA inquiry begins with evaluating whether a project site contains any “historical resources,” then evaluates whether that project will cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource such that the resource’s historical significance is materially impaired.

If it can be demonstrated that a project will cause damage to a unique archaeological resource, the lead agency may require reasonable efforts be made to permit any or all of these resources to be preserved in place or left in an undisturbed state. To the extent that they cannot be left undisturbed, mitigation measures are required (California Public Resources Code Section 21083.2[a], [b], and [c]).

California Public Resources Code Section 21083.2(g) defines a unique archaeological resource as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that without merely adding to the current body of knowledge, there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions and that there is a demonstrable public interest in that information.
2. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest of its type or the best available example of its type.
3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

Impacts to non-unique archaeological resources are generally not considered a significant environmental impact (California Public Resources Code section 21083.2(a); CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(c)(4)). However, if a non-unique archaeological resource qualifies as tribal cultural resource (California Public Resources Code Section 21074(c), 21083.2(h)), further consideration of significant impacts is required. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 assigns special importance to human remains and specifies procedures to be used when Native American remains are discovered. As described below, these procedures are detailed in California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98.

San Diego Register of Historical Resources (SDRHR)

The San Diego Register of Historical Resources includes buildings, structures, objects, sites and districts important to the historical, architectural, cultural and archaeological history of San Diego. The first site designated as a historical resource by the City of San Diego was Balboa Park's El Prado in 1967. Since that date, over 1,000 individual resources and 25 historic districts encompassing several thousand more properties have been designated and listed on the City's register.

The Historical Resources Guidelines of the City of San Diego's Land Development Manual (LDM) identifies the criteria under which a resource may be historically designated. It states that any improvement, building, structure, sign, interior element and fixture, site, place, district, area, or object may be designated a historical resource by the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) if it meets one or more of the following designation criteria:¹²

- A. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's, or a neighborhood's, historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development;
- B. Identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history;
- C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
- D. Is representative of the notable work or a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman;

¹² City of San Diego Planning Department, "Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria," 1.

- E. Is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources; or
- F. Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

Criteria Considerations and Special Considerations

Some resource types require additional evaluation to be eligible for listing on the NRHP, CRHR, and/or SDRHR. This additional evaluation is known as “Criteria Considerations” when working with the NRHP, and “Special Considerations” when working with the CRHR or SDRHP. The resources that require additional evaluation vary between the three registers.

NRHP Criteria Considerations

Religious properties, moved properties, birthplaces and graves, cemeteries, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and properties achieving significance within the past fifty years are not usually considered for listing in the National Register.¹³ National Register Bulletin #15 provides detailed guidance for applying Criteria Considerations for these resource types.

Of these resource types, the one most commonly encountered in San Diego is addressed in Criteria Consideration G: resources that have achieved significance within the past fifty years. Fifty years is generally recognized as a sufficient amount of time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance. Properties less than 50 years of age can be eligible for listing, however, if it is of exceptional importance. Demonstrating exceptional importance requires the development of a historic context statement for the resource being evaluated, a comparative analysis with similar resources, and scholarly sources on the property type and historic context. The phrase “exceptional importance” is a measure of a property's importance within the appropriate historic context, whether the scale of that context is local, State, or national.¹⁴

¹³ U.S. Department of the Interior, “National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” 25.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, 42.

CRHR Special Considerations

The California Register provides special considerations for moved resources, resources achieving significance within the past fifty years, and reconstructed buildings.¹⁵

- ✦ A moved building, structure or object may be listed in the California Register if it was moved to prevent its demolition at its former location and if the new location is compatible with the original character and use of the historical resource. A historical resource should retain its historic features and compatibility in orientation, setting, and general environment.
- ✦ A historical resource achieving significance within the past fifty years may be considered for listing in the California Register if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance. Unlike the NRHP, demonstrating exceptional importance is not required.
- ✦ A reconstructed building less than fifty years old may be eligible if it embodies traditional building methods and techniques that play an important role in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices.

SDRHR Special Considerations

The San Diego Register provides special considerations for moved resources and resources achieving significance within the past fifty years.¹⁶

- ✦ A moved building, structure or object, or assemblage of such resources, may be listed in the San Diego Register if it was moved prior to its period of significance. Additionally, moved buildings significant under HRB Criterion B may be designated if it is demonstrated to be the property most importantly associated with the historic event or person; and under HRB Criteria C or D if it retains enough historic features to convey its architectural values and retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Lastly, moved resources must still have an orientation, setting, and general environment comparable to those of the historic location and compatible with the resource's significance.
- ✦ A historical resource achieving significance within the past fifty years may be considered for listing in the San Diego Register if it can be demonstrated that

¹⁵ California Office of Historic Preservation, "California Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Series #6 California Register and National Register: A Comparison (for Purposes of Determining Eligibility for the California Register)," 1-2.

¹⁶ City of San Diego Planning Department, "Guidelines for the Application of Historical Resources Board Designation Criteria," 4-5.

sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance. Unlike the NRHP, demonstrating exceptional importance is not required.

Determining Whether a Resource Retains Integrity

The concept of integrity is established by the National Register, as detailed in National Register Bulletin #15, and is utilized by the California Register and San Diego Register. Simply put, integrity is the ability of a resource to convey its significance.¹⁷ All properties change over time, and it is not necessary or expected that a resource will be unaltered. However, the resource must retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity. The essential physical features are those features that define both why a property is significant and when it was significant.¹⁸

The National, California and San Diego registers recognize seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations relevant to the significance of the resource, define integrity.¹⁹ The seven aspects of integrity are:

- ✦ **Location** is the place where a historic resource was constructed or where the historic event occurred.
- ✦ **Design** is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a resource.
- ✦ **Setting** is the physical environment of a property. Setting refers to the character of a resource's location and a resource's relationship to the surrounding area.
- ✦ **Materials** are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic resource.
- ✦ **Workmanship** is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or pre-history. Workmanship includes traditional, vernacular, and high styles.
- ✦ **Feeling** is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, "National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," 44-49.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, 46.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, 44-49.

- ✦ **Association** is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic resource. Association requires the presence of physical features to convey the resource's historic character.

National Register Bulletin #15 states, "To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects... Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant... Only after significance is fully established can you proceed to the issue of integrity."²⁰ To assess the integrity of a resource, the following steps must be taken:

1. Define the essential physical features that must be present for a property to represent its significance.
2. Determine whether the essential physical features are visible enough to convey their significance.
3. Determine whether the property needs to be compared with similar properties.
4. Determine, based on the significance and essential features, which aspects of integrity are particularly vital to the property being nominated and if they are present.

Historic Context

Pre-History (<8500 BC to AD 1769)

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 to the south.²¹ 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 over 10,000 years. It is

²⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, 44.

²¹ "The Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation," *The Journal of San Diego History*, 148.; Note that early sources use the name *Diegueños* which was the name applied to the Kumeyaay by Spanish missionaries.

important to note that Native American aboriginal lifeways did not cease at European contact.

The Kumeyaay lived in small semi-permanent camping spots (or villages), often located near local springs and water sources. While rabbits and shellfish were staples of their diet, 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.²² The general route of today's Kumeyaay Highway (Interstate 8), which forms the northern boundary of the College Area neighborhood, 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 1769.²³ However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the Kumeyaay population had dwindled to a few thousand, with many living on reservation lands.²⁴ Today, Kumeyaay tribal members within the United States are divided into twelve federally recognized bands: Barona, Campo, Ewiiapaayp, Inaja-Cosmit, Jamul, La Posta, Manzanita, Mesa Grande, San Pasqual, Santa Ysabel, Sycuan, and Viejas. An additional San Diego County band, the Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Indians, is not currently federally recognized. Several more Kumeyaay communities are present in Mexico.

Spanish Period (1769 to 1821)

Spanish explorer Juan Cabrillo first landed at Point Loma in 1542; however, Spanish colonization of the San Diego area did not truly begin for over two centuries. In 1769, Spain sent an expedition of soldiers, settlers, and missionaries to Alta California to secure the northwestern border of New Spain from Russian and English interests. The members of the Spanish expedition initially camped at a location now known as Spanish Landing in the present-day neighborhood of Point Loma before moving to a site closer to the San Diego River, near the Kumeyaay village of Cosoy (Kosaai or Kosa'aay). There, they constructed a presidio (military fort) and the first iteration of Mission San Diego de Alcalá on a small hill overlooking the river.

Mission San Diego de Alcalá was the first of 21 missions that the Spanish would eventually establish in California. In 1774, the Mission was relocated to its present site six miles up the

²² San Diego State University, "San Diego Mexican & Chicano History," November 8, 2011, accessed February 23, 2021, <https://chicanohistory.sdsu.edu/chapter01/c01s03.html>.

²³ Page & Turnbull, *Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Update*, 22.

²⁴ Page & Turnbull, *Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Update*, 22.

San Diego River Valley (present-day Mission Valley) near the Kumeyaay village of Nipaguay. The building was destroyed during the Kumeyaay uprising the following year; the chapel and existing church were reconstructed between 1776 and 1777, respectively. Mission San Diego de Alcalá, like all California missions, relied on the labor of neophytes, Native Americans who were forcibly converted to Catholicism. Mission lands were extensive, and in San Diego the Mission's neophytes participated in a large ranching endeavor where herds of cattle moved west through today's Mission Valley as they grazed. Grazing lands consisted of over 58,000 acres, including the present-day College Area.²⁵

Mexican Period (1821 to 1846)

The mission and presidio systems declined after Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, gaining control of California. In the 1830s, the Mexican government began to redistribute church lands under the rancho system. The Mexican government granted 29 ranchos in San Diego County to loyal soldiers, politicians, and powerful landowning families.

One of the largest ranchos granted in San Diego was the Ex-Mission Rancho de San Diego de Alcalá, with 58,875 acres granted to Santiago Argüello by Governor Pio Pico in 1845.²⁶ The original extent of the Ex-Mission rancho encompasses much of eastern San Diego and includes the modern neighborhoods and cities of College Area, Kensington Heights, City Heights, Normal Heights, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, and Encanto (Figure 2).²⁷ Santiago Argüello was also in possession of earlier land grants including the Tiajuana rancho (granted in 1829) and the Trabujo rancho (granted in 1841), and did not live within the boundaries of the Ex-Mission rancho, instead making his home at his Tiajuana rancho.²⁸ While the location of the College Area likely continued to be used for cattle ranching in this period, no built resources were known to have been erected on the land.

²⁵ William Ellsworth Smythe, *History of San Diego, 1542-1908*, Part Two, Chapter 2: Beginnings of Agriculture and Commerce. Available online at San Diego History Center, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/books/smythe/part2-2/>.

²⁶ Richard Pourade, "Chapter Fifteen: The Toll of Time, 1769-1835," in *History of San Diego: v.2 Time of the Bells, 1769-1835* (San Diego: Copley Press, 1960-1977), accessed April 26, 2021, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/books/bells/ch15/>; San Diego State University, "San Diego Mexican & Chicano History," November 8, 2011, accessed April 26, 2021, <https://chicanohistory.sdsu.edu/maps/c03map1.html#map5>.

²⁷ Robert W. Brackett, *The History of San Diego Ranchos: The Spanish, Mexican, and American occupation of San Diego County and the story of the ownership of land grants therein*, Fourth Edition (San Diego, California: Union Title Insurance and Trust Co., 1951), 61.

²⁸ William Ellsworth Smythe, *History of San Diego, 1542-1908*, Part Two, Chapter 6: Prominent Spanish Families. Available online at San Diego History Center, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/books/smythe/part2-6/>.

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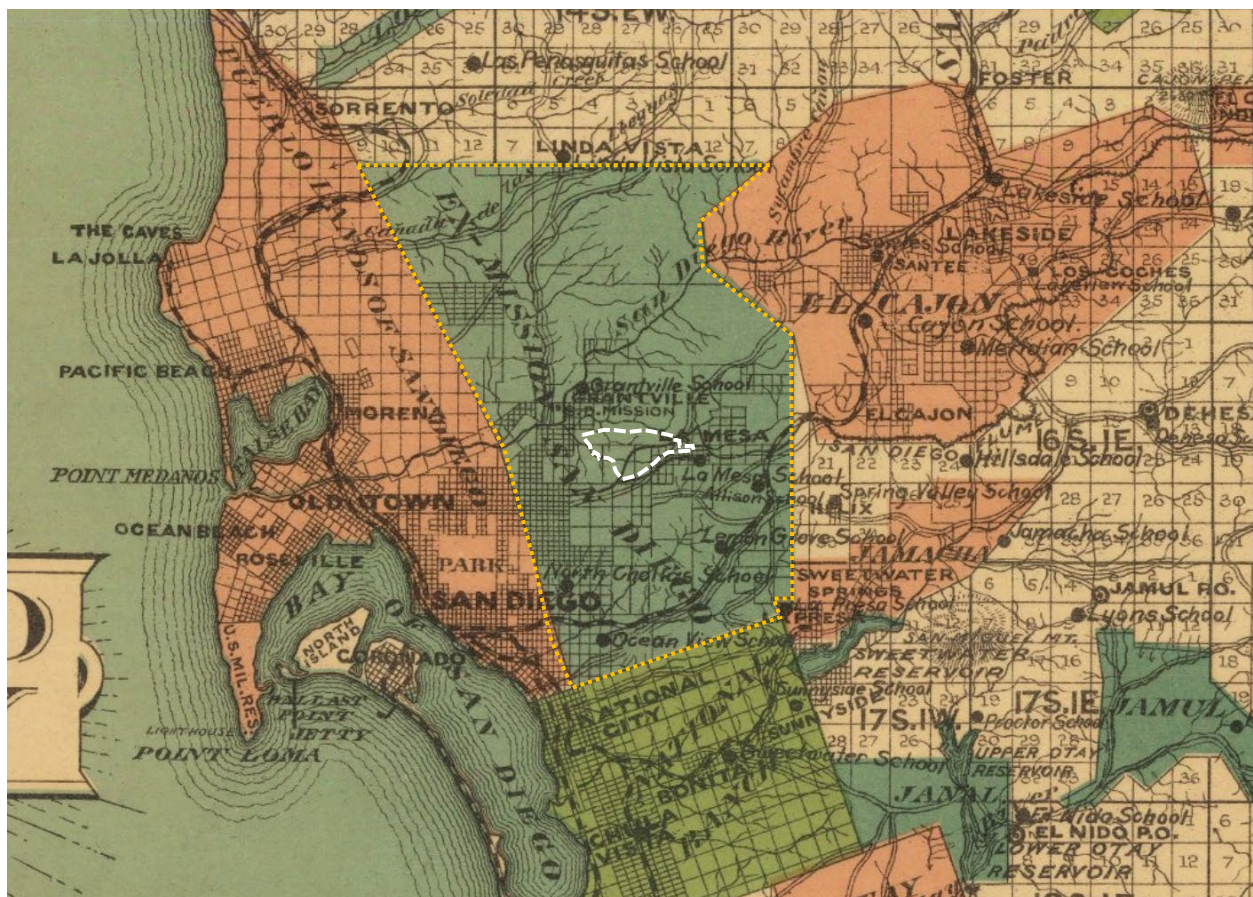


Figure 2. "Official Map of San Diego County California Compiled from Official Records and Private Sources by Irving A. Hubon. Correct to date by E.E. Knight." Circa 1900. Showing the ranchos with the Ex-Mission rancho shown in blue and dotted outline at center. Approximate location of the College Area shown with white dashed line. Source: RareMaps.com

This redistribution of land also resulted in the creation of a civilian pueblo in San Diego. In 1834, a group of San Diego residents living near present-day Old Town successfully petitioned the governor to formally declare their settlement as a pueblo.²⁹ The dividing line between Pueblo lands and Ex-Mission lands runs at a diagonal following present-day Boundary Street and the eastern edge of Mt. Hope Cemetery.³⁰

The Pueblo Lands of San Diego were divided into 1,350 parcels, ranging in size from ten-acre parcels near Old Town to 160-acre parcels further from town. A large "City Reservation" of

²⁹ Clare B. Crane, "The Pueblo Lands: San Diego's Hispanic Heritage," *The Journal of San Diego History* 37, no. 2 (Spring 1991), accessed June 18, 2021, <https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1991/april/pueblo-2/>.

³⁰ San Diego State University, "San Diego Mexican & Chicano History."

1,400 acres was set aside for parkland, and today is the location of Balboa Park.³¹ The existing boundaries of the City of San Diego also encompassed several other Mexican-era land grants, including Rancho San Bernardo, Rancho Los Peñasquitos, and parts of Rancho de La Nación, Rancho El Cajon, and Rancho Jamacha.³²

American Period (1846 to 1974)

United States forces first occupied San Diego in July 1846 during the Mexican-American War. San Diego formally became part of the United States with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which ended the war and ceded California to the United States. San Diego grew slowly and remained a frontier town until the 1860s. In 1867, land speculator Alonzo Erastus Horton acquired 800 acres, known as Horton's Addition, approximately two miles south of Old Town San Diego with the intention of developing it into a new city center.³³ The success of Horton's Addition and subsequent subdivisions surrounding it shifted San Diego's commercial center from Old Town and the presidio to Horton's Addition, which encompasses present-day downtown San Diego.³⁴

The Ex-Mission rancho, a small portion of which would become present-day College Area, was located well east of where the early City of San Diego was developing. The Argüello estate retained title to the Ex-Mission rancho lands following Santiago Argüello's death in 1862, and their ownership was confirmed through a court determination in 1876. This legal confirmation of their ownership allowed for the easier sale of portions of the rancho's vast acreage and in the late 1800s the first sales of the land initiated the early development of the College Area for a use beyond grazing and ranching.³⁵

³¹ "Our Public Park," *San Diego Union*, November 4, 1869.; "Balboa Park History," *Balboa Park* (website), Accessed June 16, 2021, <https://www.balboapark.org/about/history>.

³² Union Title Insurance and Trust Company, "Ranchos of San Diego County" [map], ca. 1947, UC San Diego Library.

³³ Historic Resources Group, *North Park Community Plan Area*, 13.

³⁴ *San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement*, 17.

³⁵ Crane, "The Pueblo Lands."

Theme: Agricultural Development (1881-1931)

In 1881, John Harbison purchased a 4,000-acre portion (equivalent to six-and-a-quarter square miles) of Argüello's Ex-Mission rancho (Figure 3). Harbison was a pioneering beekeeper whose successful and established apiary business made San Diego the greatest honey producing county in California by 1874.³⁶ His thousands of hives and large honey production led him to make extensive investments in real estate and orchards by the 1880s.³⁷

³⁶ The largest area known to have been developed by Harbison, and the location of his personal homestead, was along the Sweetwater River further east of the College Area and today is known as Harbison Canyon.

³⁷ Lee H. Watkins, "John S. Harbison: Pioneer San Diego Beekeeper," in *The Journal of San Diego History*, v. 15, n. 4, (Fall 1969), Available online at San Diego History Center, <https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1969/october/harbison/>.

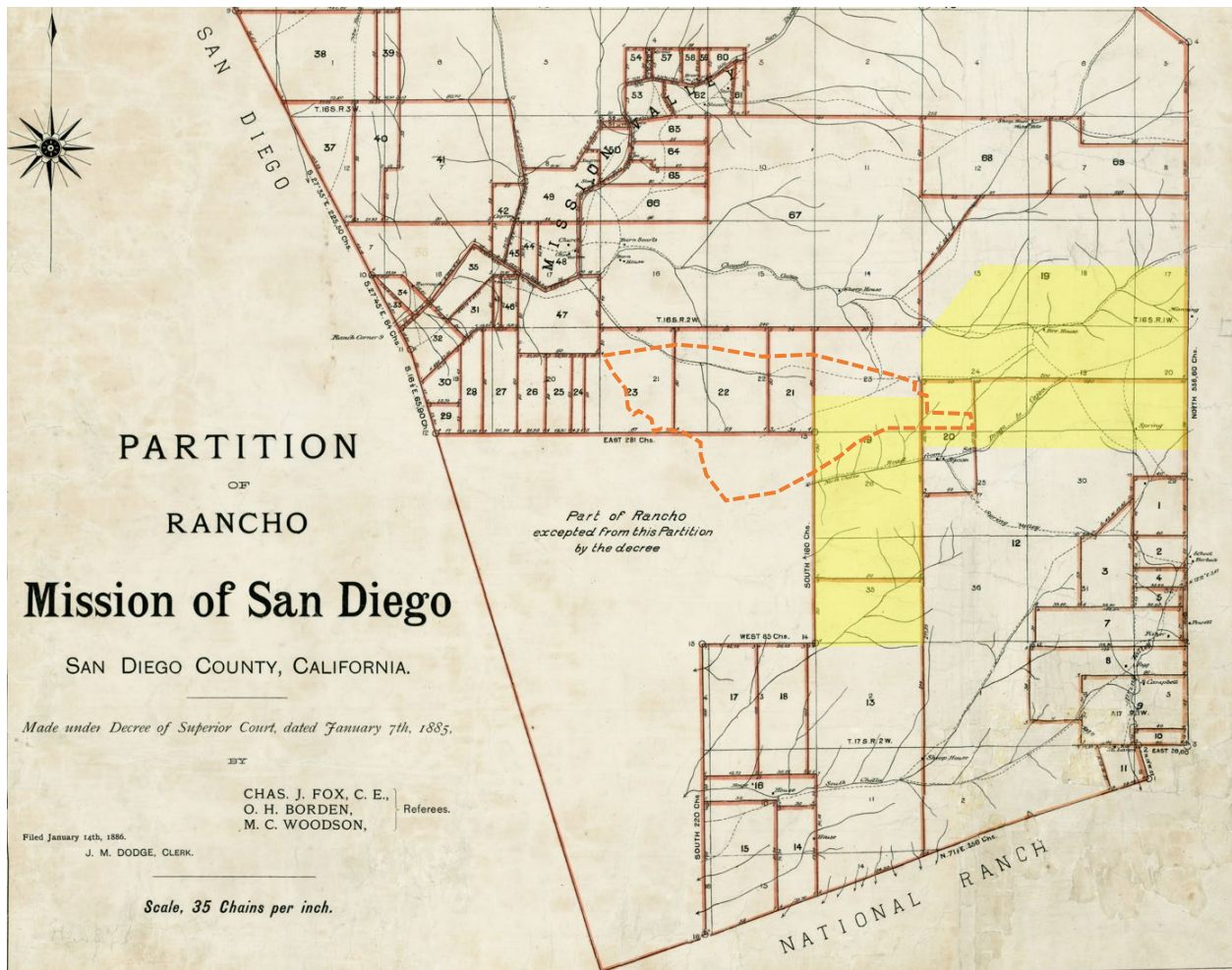


Figure 3: John Harbison's land identified in yellow on a map of the lands of the Ex-Mission Rancho, printed in 1885. The approximate future boundary of the College Area is shown with an orange dashed line. Image Source: The Barry Lawrence Ruderman Map Collection courtesy Stanford University Libraries.

Harbison's Ex-Mission land holdings extended beyond the boundaries of today's College Area and included the area directly north, encompassing portions of the Murray reservoir, Alvarado Canyon, and northern La Mesa.³⁸ Within the College Area, Harbison's land included East College Area, namely the section that became La Mesa. While Harbison appears to have purchased this land for its potential to expand his apiary business, it is unknown whether he located any hives in the College Area or its surrounding acreage during the few years that he owned the land.

San Diego Flume Company, La Mesa Colony and Eastern College Area

³⁸ "History of La Mesa Summary," La Mesa Historical Society, Accessed April 15, 2021, <https://lamesahistory.com/history/>.

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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, connecting San Diego to the southern transcontinental railroad. With increased transportation and access to additional economic markets, San Diego's citizens and developers expected a period of extreme growth.

To support the projected population growth and development, San Diego faced increased pressure to bring water to the area. The San Diego Flume Company formed in 1886 to meet this need by piping water to the city from the Cuyamaca Mountains, located within the Peninsular Ranges System to the east, along the interior of San Diego County. To accomplish this, the Flume Company purchased land stretching from the eastern edge of the City of San Diego to the Cuyamaca Mountains to the east and constructed a 37-mile-long open flume to transport the water (Figure 4). Today's College Area, located about six miles east of the San Diego city limits in the 1880s, was one of the areas that the Flume Company operated in, and one of the large parcels they acquired in 1887 was Harbison's land. The Flume Company subsequently subdivided the land under the name of "La Mesa Colony."



Figure 4: An example of the open flume at an unknown location in 1905 as built by the San Diego Flume Company. Image Source: San Diego City Clerk's Office.

The La Mesa Colony subdivision included 5- and 10-acre irregularly shaped parcels for agricultural use encircling a planned townsite with a regular street grid and residential

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parcels (Figure 5). The present-day roads of Catoctin Drive and 63rd Street (then called Choctaw Drive and originally called Adobe Falls Road) can be seen forming a “Y” at the western edge of the subdivision; while the townsite was centered at the modern intersection of El Cajon Boulevard and 70th Street at the eastern end of the modern College Area.³⁹

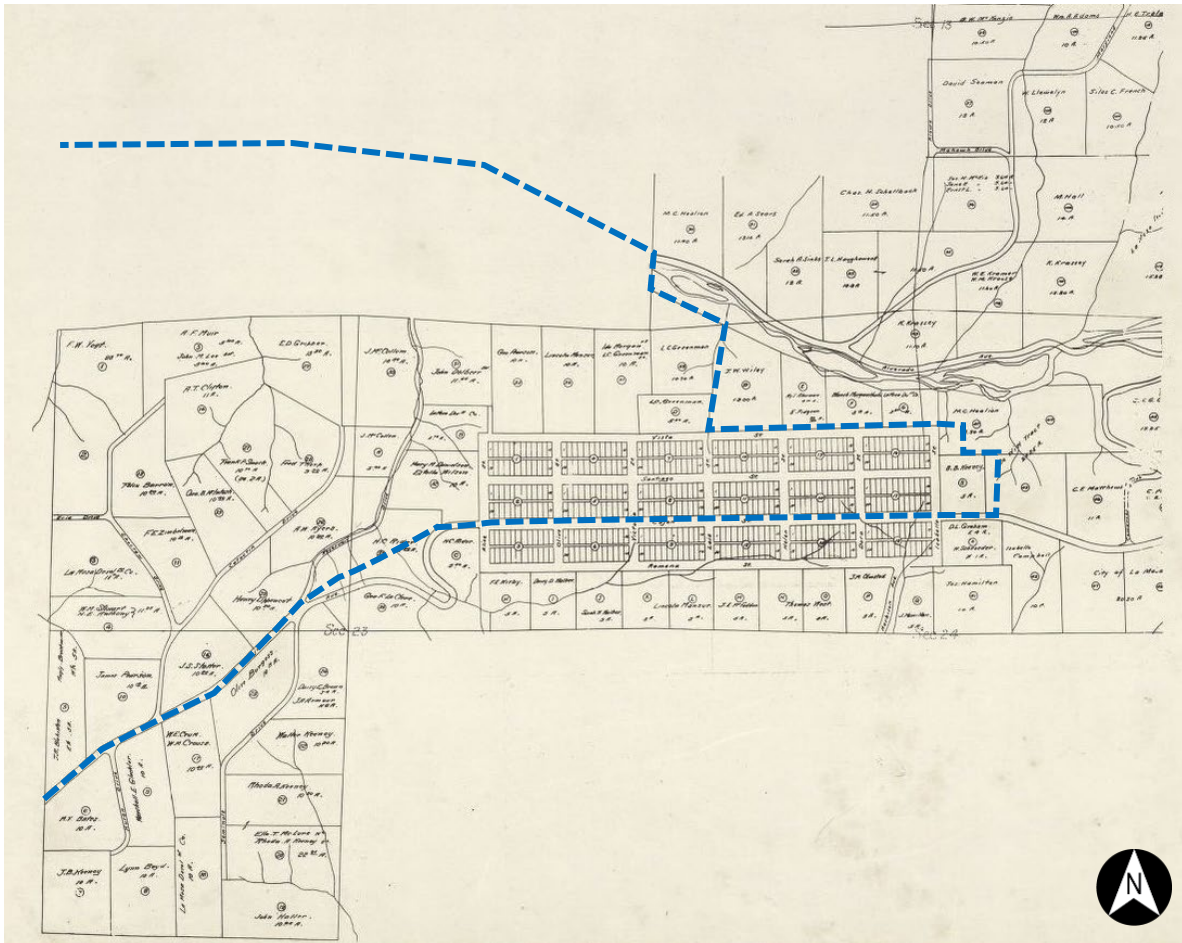


Figure 5. La Mesa Colony, showing the gridded town site and surrounding 5- to 10-acre agricultural parcels. Approximate modern boundary of College Area is shown with dashed blue line. Source: William E. Alexander, *Plat book of San Diego County, California*. (Los Angeles: Pacific Plat Book Co., [circa 1912]) in the collection of the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division.

The La Mesa Colony subdivision was primarily intended to serve an agricultural use and follow the example of the independent town of La Mesa to the east (just beyond the modern boundaries of the City of San Diego). La Mesa was first established as Allison Springs in the

³⁹ Regarding the approximate size of the subdivision refer to Newland, 10.; For the location of the planned townsite refer to “Water and the Railroad,” La Mesa Historical Society; William E. Alexander, *Plat book of San Diego County, California*. [Los Angeles: Pacific Plat Book Co., circa 1912] Map of La mesa Colony, page 57. Accessed May 11, 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2007626895/>.

1860s and developed due to natural springs that supported a local livestock industry.⁴⁰ Early residents, including Robert Allison (for whom Allison Springs was named), supported the arrival of the Flume Company in the area, and with the additional water resources of the flume, La Mesa was able to establish a flourishing citrus industry in the last decade of the nineteenth century.⁴¹

The area of La Mesa Colony, La Mesa, and Lemon Grove was advertised in the 1890s for its warm climate that was an ideal location for citrus and avocado growing, as well as poultry farms (Figure 6).⁴² Promotional material for the town of La Mesa described the proliferation of citrus orchards on 5- and 10-acre farms following the planting of the first lemon grove in 1889. As discussed in a series of articles on the towns outside of San Diego in 1895, "along the flume pipe, between San Diego and the east line of La Mesa, over 1,200 acres have been set out, chiefly in lemons."⁴³ The locus of processing, packing, and shipping the region's citrus was in La Mesa, with surrounding areas like La Mesa Colony, sections of central College Area (corresponding to the modern neighborhood of El Cerrito Heights), the current San Diego neighborhood of Rolando Village, and Lemon Grove to the south, that were also involved in agricultural production of citrus.⁴⁴

The completion of the La Mesa dam in 1895 – a predecessor to the current Murray Reservoir at the east edge of the City of San Diego – brought additional development to this agricultural area. While a booming citrus industry developed in the adjacent areas of La Mesa and Lemon Grove, it appears that agricultural development at the eastern end of the modern College



Figure 6. Advertisement by the San Diego Flume Company for La Mesa Lands. Source: *San Diego Evening Tribune*, December 25, 1895.

⁴⁰ Other names used for the town of La Mesa include Allison Springs, La Mesa Springs, and occasionally La Mesa Colony, although the use of La Mesa Colony appears to be the result of confusion around the boundaries of the two areas by non-residents, not due to the use of the name by the town itself.

⁴¹ "La Mesa: Land of the Lemon Orange, Grape, Apple and Pear," *San Diego Union*, January 1, 1895.

⁴² "La Mesa Lands," advertisement. *San Diego Evening Tribune*, December 25, 1895; "La Mesa Colony Tract is Sold to J.L. Horning," *San Diego Union and Daily Bee*, May 8, 1908.

⁴³ "La Mesa: Land of the Lemon Orange, Grape, Apple and Pear," *San Diego Union*, January 1, 1895.

⁴⁴ La Mesa was also a stop on the San Diego, Cuyamaca & Eastern Railroad, completed in 1889, that connected it to New Town in San Diego and points east, allowing for packing and transport of goods to be focused in La Mesa. "History of La Mesa Summary," La Mesa Historical Society; "San Diego and Cuyamaca Railway; San Diego, Cuyamaca and Eastern Railway," San Diego Railroad Museum, accessed June 18, 2021, <http://www.sdrm.info/history/sdc/index.html>.

Area, namely within La Mesa Colony, remained less successful. While farms and orchards were present, La Mesa Colony did not experience adequate population growth and economic success to support the development of the planned town center, and did not compete agriculturally with nearby La Mesa or Lemon Grove.

Some of the challenge for La Mesa Colony was likely the unreliable water resources of the area, as there were no natural springs and, while all agricultural parcels were sold with water rights from the Flume Company, the Flume Company was unreliable in supplying the promised water resources.⁴⁵ By 1898, litigation around the Flume Company's inability to meet its contractual obligations listed several of La Mesa Colony's "ranchers and citrus growers" among the litigants.

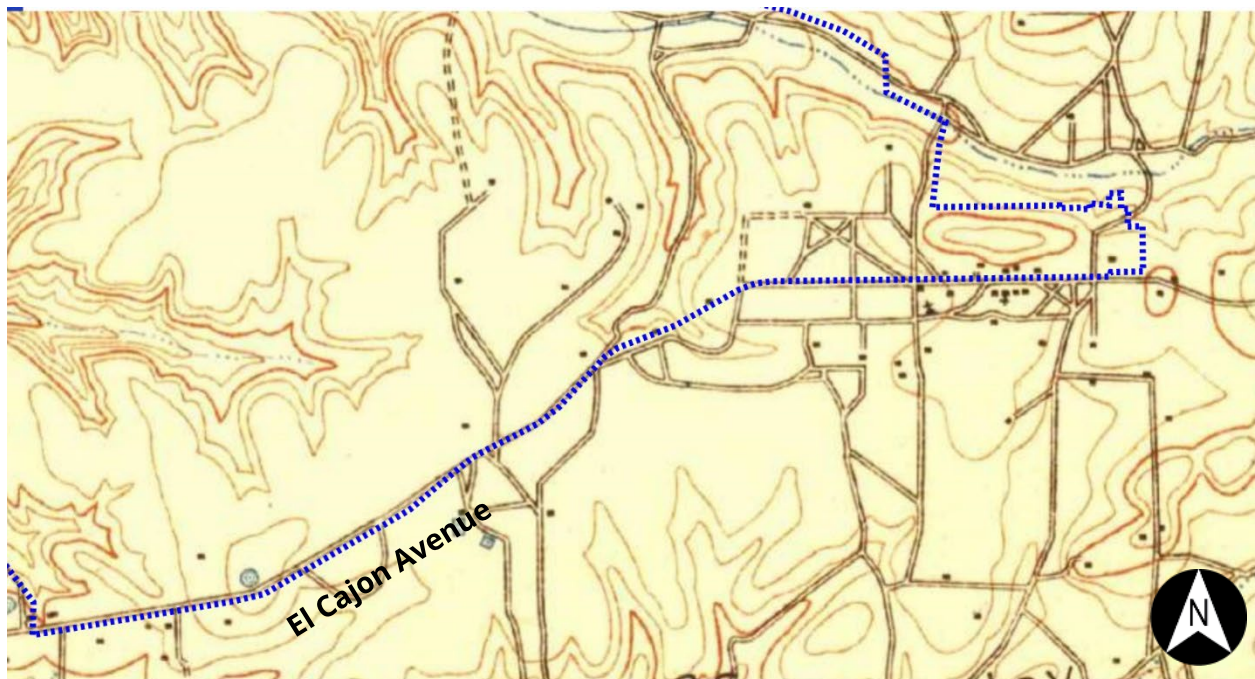


Figure 7. Detail view of La Mesa Colony and El Cajon Avenue in 1903. Each black dot represents a building. College Area CPU boundary in dashed outline. Source: La Jolla, CA 1903 map, USGS TopoViewer.

The U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps of the College Area in 1903 show that by the early years of the twentieth century, some buildings, likely farmhouses and related agricultural outbuildings, were scattered within the eastern and southern portions of the College Area (Figure 7). The western portions of the modern College Area, which were still located well east of the city limits of San Diego, remained relatively undeveloped due to their

⁴⁵ "La Mesa Lands: Special Prices on Lands with Water," Advertisement, *San Diego Evening Tribune*, December 25, 1895.; "Flume's Condition: Unable to Supply Water to its Patrons," *San Diego Union*, June 12, 1898.

difficult topography with deep ravines and the distance between flat mesa-top land and the established roadway (now El Cajon Boulevard).

Agricultural uses of the eastern portion of modern College Area continued for many years and one notable model farm cooperative, Oakmere Ranch, was present at the western end of La Mesa Colony from 1919 to 1921. This unique agricultural endeavor was a short-lived model hog farm within the Oakmere subdivision (Lot 4 of La Mesa Colony) located north of El Cajon Boulevard near College Avenue along the modern streets of 62nd, Stewart, Hobart, Rose, and 63rd streets (Figure 8 and Figure 9).⁴⁶ In 1913 a subdivision map for “Oakmere” was filed that demonstrates an expectation that standard residential development—with standard 25-foot-wide residential parcels—would occur shortly. However, by 1916 the area remained undeveloped, and advertisements of the period offered the undeveloped parcels as “ideal for chicken ranches.”⁴⁷ By 1919, this subdivision had become the Oakmere Ranch, a model cooperative hog ranch.

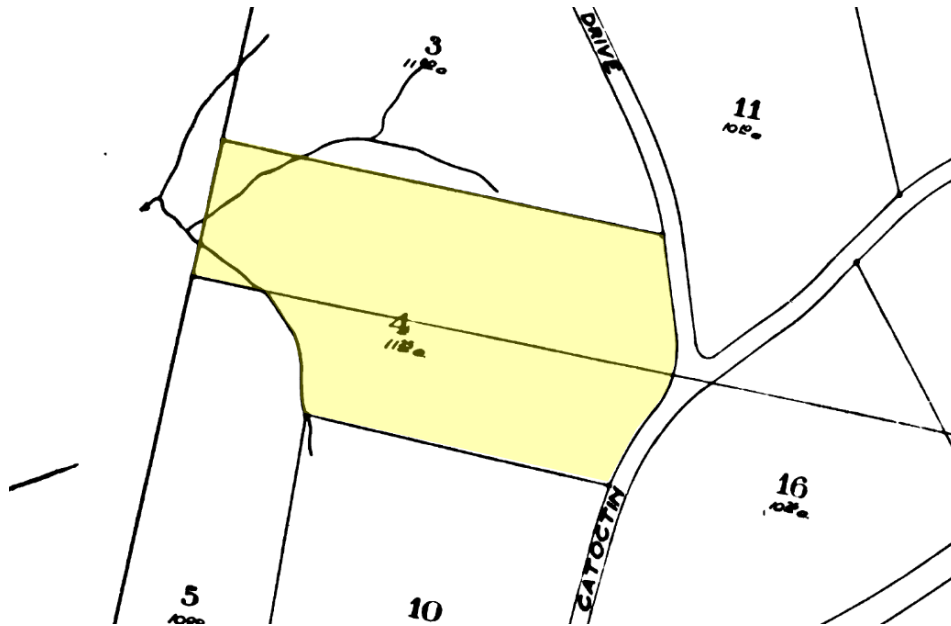


Figure 8: Detail of the subdivision map of La Mesa Colony, showing Lot 4, which became the Oakmere Ranch from 1919 to 1921. Source: San Diego Office of the Assessor, Recorder and Country Clerk.

⁴⁶ City of San Diego Subdivision Maps, map 1576, filed in 1913. Available through the San Diego County Survey Records System.

⁴⁷ "For Sale – Suburban Property: 25 Cents," *San Diego Union*, January 1, 1916.

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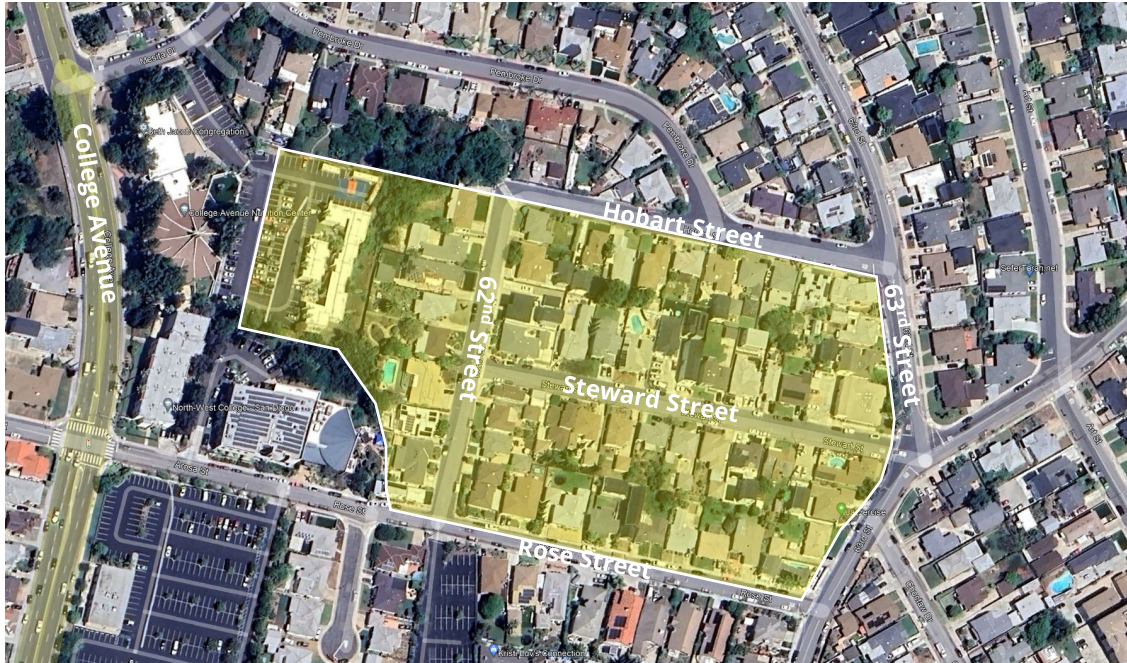


Figure 9: Overlay of the former Lot 4 of La Mesa Colony on a current aerial showing the approximate historic location of the Oakmere Ranch. Source: Google Earth, Edited by Page & Turnbull.

China Sow Pigs With
Free Pure Bred Poland-
Every Lot Sold at



OAKMERE

We also build your pen, fence, shed, cement watering and feed boxes free.
We take care of your sow for half of the young pigs.
We pay all expense.
Champion Poland-Chinas have sold as high as \$5000.
Our stock is first class.
You may raise a \$5000 hog.
Prices cut way down.
Terms \$10.00 a month.
Our auto goes to Oakmere at 10 a. m. and 4 p. m. Free ride.
Start raising pork for market.
Select your lot and pig now.
Big profits.
Call at our office for circular.

OAKMERE RANCH

813 Owl Bldg. Main 2078

Figure 10. Advertisement for Oakmere Ranch, published in the San Diego Union on June 22, 1919.

The Oakmere Ranch experiment closed in late 1921. During its two years of operation, interested parties would purchase a parcel that came with one sow, and would be furnished with fences and buildings. Oakmere staff would breed the sows with the ranch's hogs, and feed and care for all animals at the ranch. Profit sharing was accomplished through the breeding of the pigs – with Oakmere retaining half of all piglets – and the subsequent sale of pigs to the slaughterhouse (Figure 10).⁴⁸ No extant buildings or resources have been located that remain from this early model cooperative livestock business, but the presence of Oakmere Ranch from 1919-1921 illustrates the continuing agricultural character of the College Area at this time.

Due to the raw, natural qualities of the mesas, one of the early stories of the College Area involves the tunneling activities of Dr. W.R. Young. Dr. Young was widely reported to have dug a 250-foot tunnel from 1919 to 1920 as a form of vigorous outdoor exercise. Young's tunnels were located in the northwestern section of the plan area, near the modern intersection of Fairmont Avenue and Montezuma Road and beneath the current neighborhood of Alvarado Estates.⁴⁹ While the tunnels have since been filled in, the story of Dr. Young's tunnels demonstrate the perception of the area as a wilderness with little development.

With the slow introduction of residential development in the 1920s and additional residential and institutional development created by the establishment of the new San Diego State University campus in the College Area in 1931, agricultural uses and property types were slowly phased out and replaced.

⁴⁸ No further mention of the Oakmere hog ranch was found in newspapers of the period after late 1921. "Oakmere Ranch" advertisement, *San Diego Union*, June 22, 1919.; "San Diego Co-Operative Hog Growers," advertisement, *San Diego Union*, September 7, 1919.

⁴⁹ Abe Opincar, "Thomas Baumann's Kensington-Talmadge 1910-1985," *San Diego Reader*, May 16, 1985, accessed April 15, 2021, <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/1985/may/16/feature-digging-it-kensington/>; Susan Clarke Crisafulli, "Alvarado Estates Archives: Young's Caves," San Diego Community Newspaper Group, November 21, 2019, accessed April 15, 2021, http://www.sdnews.com/view/full_story/27680301/article-Alvarado-Estates-archives--Young-s-Caves?instance=most_popular1.

Property Types

Farms, ranches, and orchards in the College Area would have included a residential building and associated buildings and structures, such as livestock or poultry sheds, barns, pens, and other outbuildings for agricultural production. Due to the typical lot sizes of five to ten acres for agricultural production, orchards, or livestock and poultry raising, early farmhouses and associated buildings and structures would diverge from the modern street grid and established setbacks within the College Area. Buildings that are deeply setback from the street, have unusually large lots, or have groupings of associated structures, are elements to look for when identifying possible extant agricultural buildings within the College Area (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Examples of properties that may be associated with the College Area's agricultural history, such as 7275 Saranac Street which may be potentially an early farmhouse (left), or 6758 Saranac Street, which is a property with a large lot and the residence set back deeply from the road (right).

Character-Defining Features

- Irregular placements of primary residence on the lot, sometimes with a deep setback or on a large lot.
- Wood framed vernacular main residence (farm or ranch house), usually with wood cladding and one or two stories tall.
- Barns or small structures for housing and feeding livestock or storing equipment.
- Water tank houses (none currently known within the College Area).
- Small-scale elements may include signs announcing the ranch's name, water and feeding troughs, windmills, fences, and/or cattle guards.
- Open landscape associated with agricultural use and relationship between buildings/structures and the agricultural use.

Eligibility Standards

Few, if any, agricultural properties appear to survive, though some may exist hidden among the area's later residential developments. Any surviving properties would likely be considered historically significant due to the rarity of this property type and their connection to the early agricultural development of the College Area. Such properties may be found significant for the national, state, or local historic register under one of the following criteria:

- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element) for association with agricultural development in general or with a specific development, such as La Mesa Colony or Oakmere Ranch in the College Area between 1887 and 1931.
 - Properties would be eligible under this theme if they retain the presence of the farm or ranch house and the suggestion of their former setting, such as a larger lot, a different setback than surrounding parcels, a landscape with fruit trees, associated outbuildings or features including fencing, water conveyance systems, etc.
 - Integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association should remain along with sufficient integrity of design, materials, and/or workmanship to convey the property's association with College Area's agricultural history.
- NRHP B / CRHR 2 (Persons) for association with persons important to the early agricultural history of the area as it relates to national, state, or local history.

Study List

The following properties were identified during the research phase and through the preparation of this theme. A conclusion has not been reached regarding the significance of these properties, which should be evaluated in the future on a site-specific basis to determine their significance or lack thereof.

Street Number	Street Name	APN	Possible Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
7275	Saranac Street	4690800700	Agricultural property	Vernacular	Older house with an outbuilding
6758	Saranac Street	4683221000	Agricultural property	Pueblo Revival	Large lot; with main house deeply set back
6824	Saranac Street	4683231900	Agricultural property	Unknown	Very deep lot; with grouping of buildings set back from the street

Theme: Early Residential Development (1886–1945)

The San Diego Flume Company's Planned Townsite

As discussed within the prior Agricultural Development Theme section, the San Diego Flume Company's plan for La Mesa Colony in 1887 included a planned townsite that appears to have been the earliest planned residential enclave in the modern College Area. The planned townsite consisted of 18 blocks in a six-by-three orthogonal street grid bounded by present-day 67th Street on the west, Saranac Street on the north, 73rd street on the east, and Amherst Street on the south (located one block south of El Cajon Boulevard, this last block is located just outside of the College Area Community Plan area) (refer to Figure 5).⁵⁰ Each block was platted to show 24 parcels per block (12 along each long north and south side).

La Mesa Colony subdivision did not experience the substantial boom that the San Diego Flume Company envisioned.⁵¹ As a result of the minimal residential development, the street grid was not fully formed by 1903 and several unplanned streets informally cut through the planned blocks on a diagonal, as shown in Figure 7. These diagonal streets are no longer visible in the built patterns of the street grid today and appear to have been eliminated by the late 1920s (Figure 12).

The larger San Diego region experienced a slight economic bust in 1888 that further chilled development in the city's march eastward. For this reason, the speculative 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 City of San Diego Reaches the College Area and Brings Residential Development

The land just north and south of modern El Cajon Boulevard became a locus of 1920s speculative subdivisions due to its location along the east-bound arterial El Cajon Avenue, its natural topography, mild climate, and strategic location in the development path of the City of San Diego as it expanded to the east. The City of San Diego had annexed East San Diego, located just west of modern College Area, in 1923, and this gave rise to the idea of "Greater San Diego." Greater San Diego was a slogan and approach by which the City would expand

⁵⁰ It is notable that 70th Street was significant for the residents of La Mesa Colony as a north-south route that connected the Colony and the La Mesa and Murray dams, and was in use prior to 1900. First named Lois Street and shown on the La Mesa Colony subdivision map in 1887, today, 70th Street becomes Lake Murray Boulevard on the north side of Alvarado Canyon.

⁵¹ "La Mesa Lands: Special Prices on Lands with Water," Advertisement, *San Diego Evening Tribune*, December 25, 1895.

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its physical boundaries and population by incorporating established communities just outside its borders. With the annexation of East San Diego, the modern College Area was the next parcel of land to the east just outside the City's limits.

The earliest subdivisions of the 1920s in the College Area were established just after the annexation of East San Diego and are located toward the southwest corner of the planning area (Figure 12, areas shown in the salmon color were platted in the 1920s).⁵²

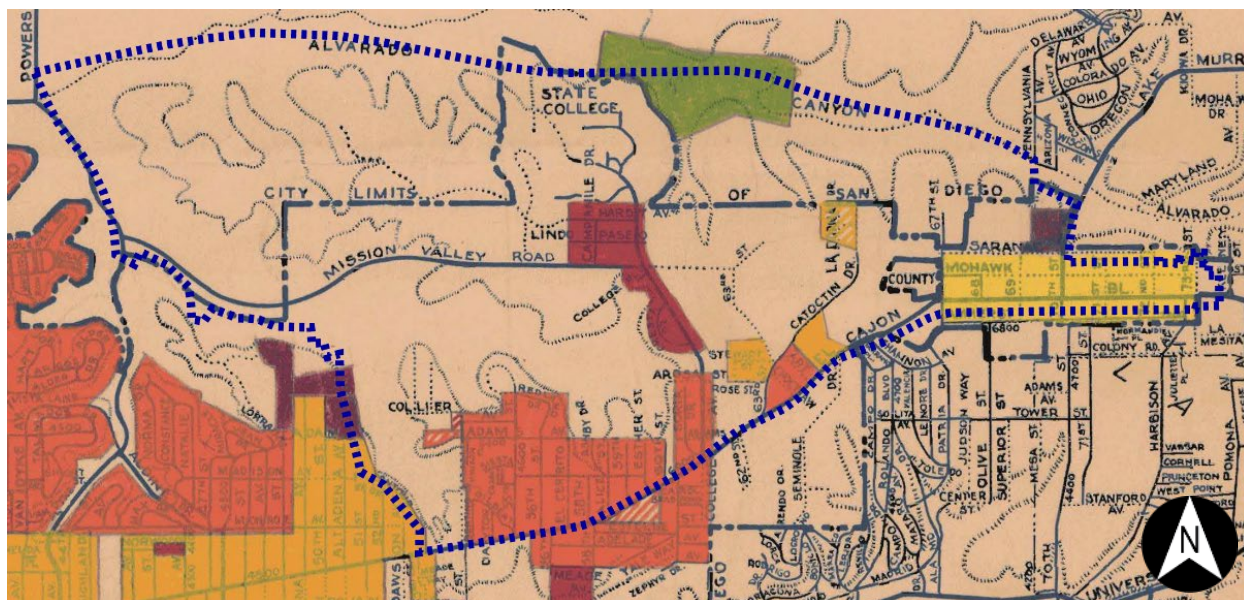


Figure 12. "Subdivided Lands: City of San Diego," map updated 1942. Shaded areas show the decade in which the subdivision was filed. Yellow = prior to 1900 (La Mesa Colony); Golden yellow = 1900-1920 (Oakmere); Pink = 1920-1930; Magenta = 1930-1940; Green = Parks and Recreation. Dashed outline shows the approximate boundaries of the College Area. Source: City of San Diego Historic Map Collection. The College Area boundary added by Page & Turnbull.

The Redland Gardens subdivision map was filed in 1923 and included lots north of El Cajon Avenue between 55th Streets and El Cerrito Drive. This location just northeast of City Heights/East San Diego was clearly planned by developer C.H. Tingey to take advantage of the growth of, and interest in, East San Diego. The streets and sidewalks were paved in 1923 and Tingey pushed an aggressive advertising campaign—with the motto of "rare in beauty, rich in returns"—that highlighted its role as a suburb of East San Diego and the imminent

⁵² City Planning Commission of San Diego, "Subdivided Lands: City of San Diego" (1900, updated 1942), City of San Diego Historic Planning Maps. Accessed April 12, 2021.

<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/digitalarchives/pdf/historicalmaps/sdslmd.pdf>.

promise of an electric streetcar that had been under discussion since 1900 (refer to **Theme: Commercial Development (ca. 1910-1974)** for information on the proposed streetcar).⁵³

Tingey's advertisements also referenced the area as ideal for those interested in the "back-to-the-farm" movement, which was a popular element of the 1915 Panama California Exposition.⁵⁴ The continued agricultural setting of the remaining acreage of the College Area in the early 1920s made the idea of small-scale personal farming a more appealing idea for those who might not be entirely ready for the onset of urbanization along the eastern mesas (Figure 13).⁵⁵

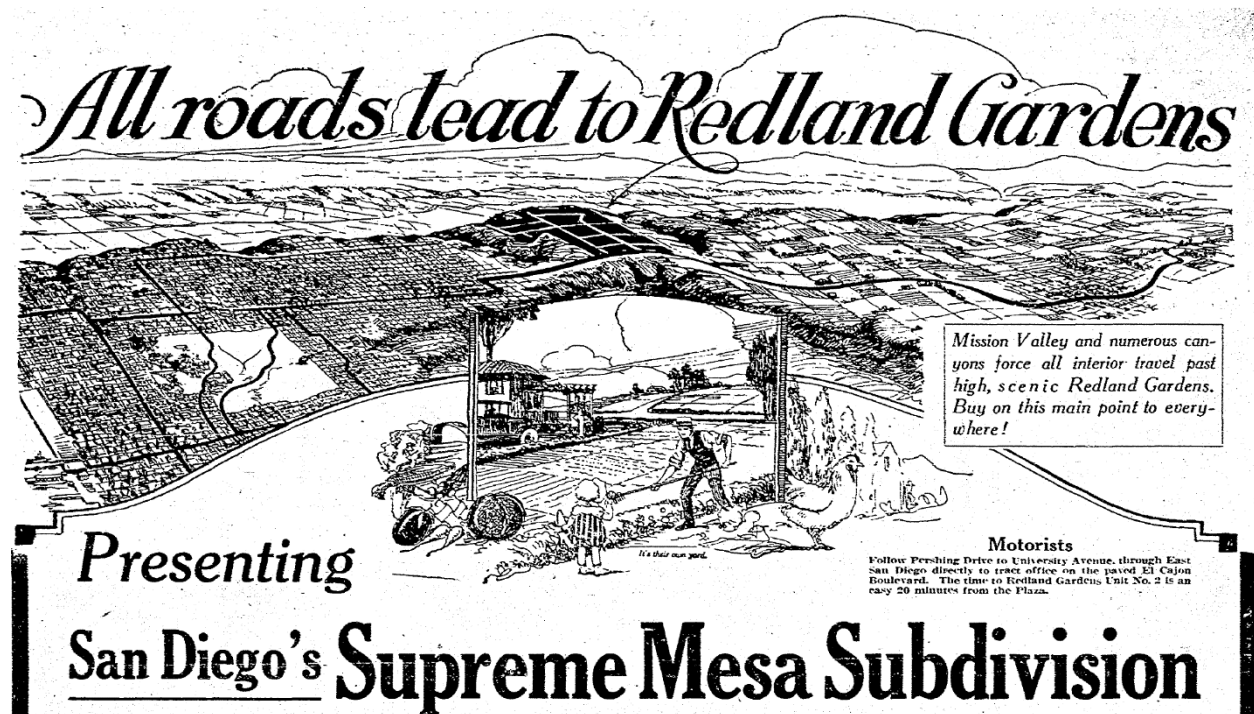


Figure 13. Advertisement for Redland Gardens, published in the San Diego Union on August 10, 1924.

Redland Gardens was soon joined by additional subdivisions including Redland Gardens Extension (1923), Highland Garden (1924), Acacia Park (1926), El Cerrito Heights (1926), Cajon Terrace (1927), and El Retiro (1927) (Figure 14).⁵⁶ Another example is El Cerrito Heights that

⁵³ "Redland Gardens is the Wrong Name," Advertisement. *San Diego Union*, April 15, 1923.; for reference to the paving of the area, refer to "A Dream Fulfilled! Redland Gardens ---San Diego's Finest Subdivision," advertisement, *San Diego Union*, August 5, 1923.

⁵⁴ References to the area as part of San Diego's "baby-farm" or "back-to-the-farm" movement in "A Dream Fulfilled," advertisement, *San Diego Union*, August 5, 1923.

⁵⁵ "A Dream Fulfilled! Redland Gardens ---San Diego's Finest Subdivision," August 5, 1923.

⁵⁶ Subdivision maps on file with the City of San Diego, available through the San Diego County Survey Records System at <https://srs.sandiegocounty.gov/>.

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was subdivided in 1926 with A.G. Smith as the developer of the tract under the name “El Cerrito Park Company.”⁵⁷ Early advertisements for the area stressed its location along El Cajon Avenue, its location “directly in the path of the city’s greatest residential growth,” and its “fogless and frostless” weather. As a marketing strategy, Smith retained a grove of lemon trees that were already present on the land to demonstrate their health and lack of frost damage as “mute but eloquent testimonials of an ideal climate.”⁵⁸

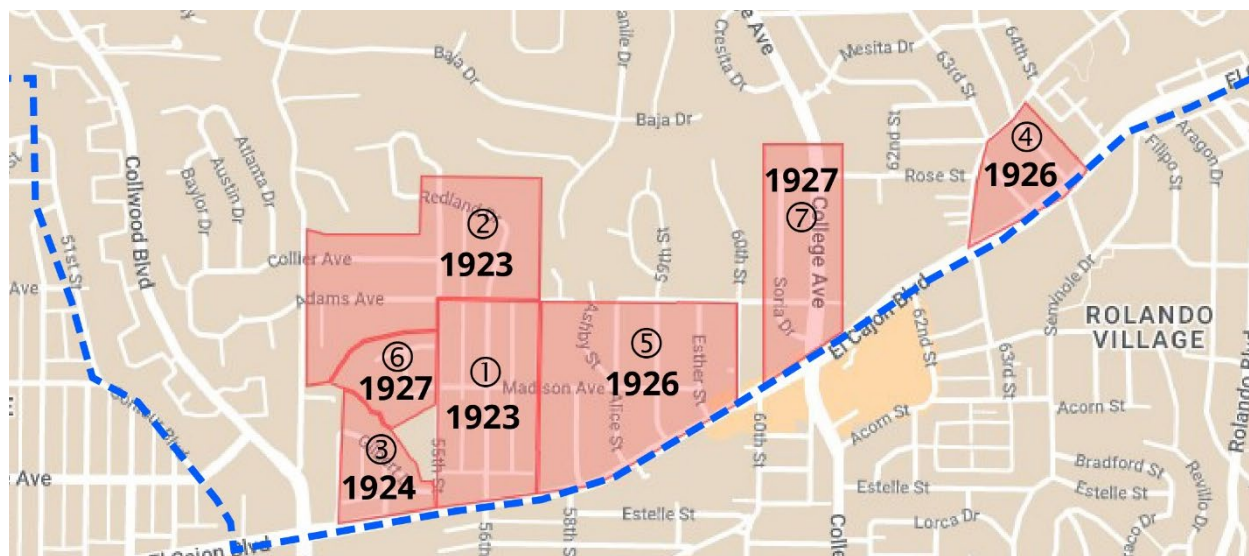


Figure 14: Boundaries of the subdivision maps filed for College Area in the 1920s. Subdivisions shown include 1: Redland Gardens, 2: Redland Gardens Extension, 3: Highland Gardens, 4: Acacia Park, 5: El Cerrito Heights, 6: Cajon Terrace, 7: El Retiro. Map is based on the recorded boundaries of maps filed and in the City of San Diego’s records. Map created by Page & Turnbull.

Although the neighborhoods of El Cerrito Heights and Redland Gardens became a part of San Diego in the 1920s, the 1920s subdivisions experienced a more gradual development pattern than was initially advertised, likely due to their distance from the built-up eastern edge of the City and the fact that the San Diego region’s population was not growing quickly enough to support extensive residential development along its periphery.⁵⁹ A number of homes were erected in the 1920s, though by 1930, only a handful of buildings were seen along the roads of the 1920s subdivisions north of El Cajon Avenue (Figure 15 and Figure 16). As an example, the Barron X. Kouch & Norma Meyer Schuch Spec House #2 at 4643 El Cerrito

⁵⁷ “El Cerrito has Plenty of Water,” *San Diego Union*, October 17, 1928.

⁵⁸ “It has never been done before! El Cerrito Heights,” advertisement, *San Diego Evening Tribune*, October 9, 1926.

⁵⁹ With annexation came street name changes, as names that were already in use within the city boundaries had to be changed within the newly annexed sections. Additionally, the extension of the numbered street grid system, from 54th to 73rd streets within the College Area, changed some existing street names.

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Drive started construction in 1931, faced financial difficulties and was foreclosed upon in an unfinished state, completed construction sometime in the 1930s, and finally found a long-term homeowner in 1939.⁶⁰

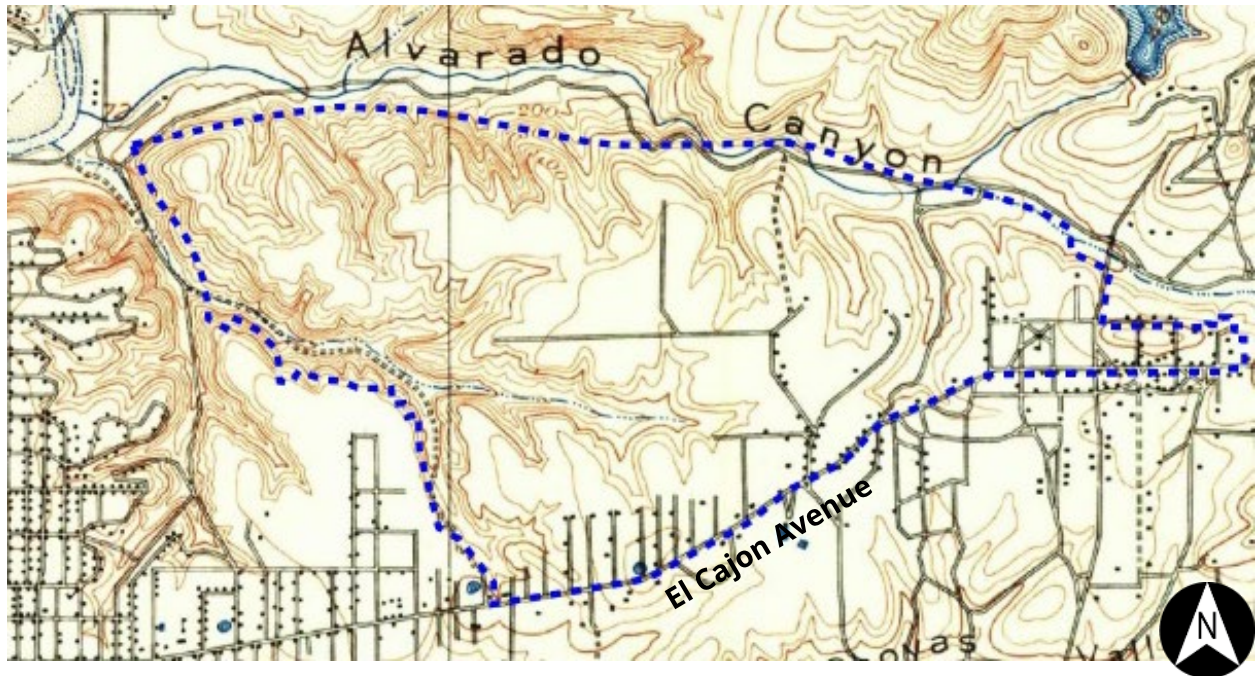


Figure 15. Detail of 1930 topographic map of modern area of College Area (dashed outline). Each black dot represents a building. Note the growth in the Talmadge neighborhood (far left), which was within the bounds of the City of San Diego, was served by a streetcar, and saw much more concentrated development than the modern College Area during the 1920s. Source: La Jolla, CA 1930 map, USGS TopoViewer.

⁶⁰ Ronald V. May, RPA, Dale Ballou May, and Sarai Johnson, "Historical Nomination of the Baron X. Kouch/Norma Mayer Schuh Speculation House #2," (San Diego: Legacy 106, Inc., 2007), 4-10.

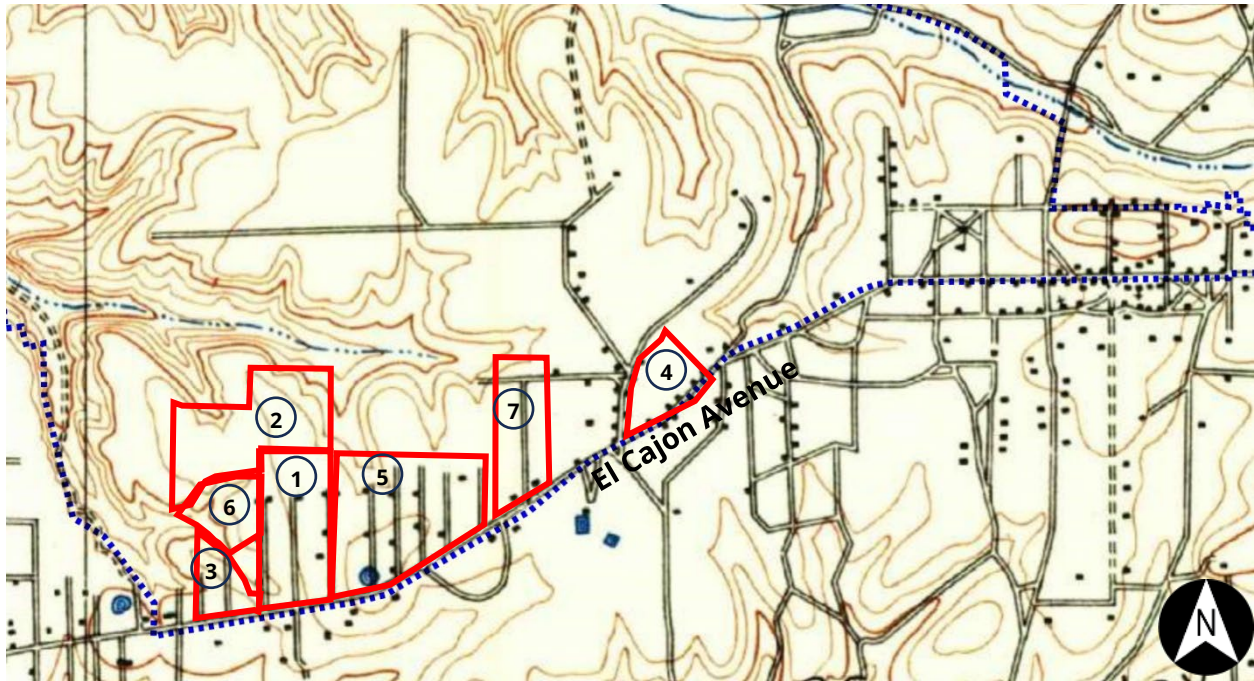


Figure 16. Closer view of La Mesa Colony and El Cajon Avenue in 1930. Each black dot represents a building. Approximate subdivision boundaries added for 1: Redland Gardens (1923), 2: Redland Gardens Extension (1923), 3: Highland Gardens (1924), 4: Acacia Park (1926), 5: El Cerrito Heights (1926), 6: Cajon Terrace (1927), 7: El Retiro (1927). The College Area CPU boundary in dash outline. Source: La Jolla, CA 1930 map, USGS TopoViewer. Edited by Page & Turnbull

Despite the Great Depression, these subdivisions steadily built out through the 1930s, likely in part due to the relocation of San Diego State College (now SDSU) to this area in 1931, along with the continued outward growth of the City. However, the planned density was not reached for another two decades. Even through the mid-1930s, the area remained somewhat rural (Figure 17). A 1935 piece in the *San Diego Evening Tribune* described the Fire Station 10 firefighters (at College Avenue and Adams Avenue) waking up to find two cows grazing on the newly planted lawn around the station.⁶¹

⁶¹ "Tuba Lure Blamed as Cows Feed on Fire Station Lawn," *San Diego Evening Tribune*, January 15, 1935.



Figure 17. The 1920s subdivisions on the north side of El Cajon Avenue in 1935 have started to fill in, though vacant lots still remained. The subdivisions remained separated from the San Diego State College campus (left) that relocated to this mesa in 1931. Source: AE-1935-04, University Archives Photograph Collection, Courtesy of Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University Library & Information Access. Street names added by Page & Turnbull.

Many of the area's early residences were constructed in the prevalent Spanish Colonial Revival style, popularized by the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition. These houses feature stucco facades and clay-tile roofs. Other residences constructed from the 1920s to the late 1930s include some examples of the Mission Revival, Tudor Revival, French Eclectic, and Craftsman styles. Based on the aerial photographs and existing building stock, small groupings of such revival style designs were constructed on Berting Street and Gilbert Drive in the Highland Gardens subdivision; on El Cerrito Drive in the Redland Gardens and El Cerrito Heights subdivisions; along 55th and 56th Streets north of Madison Avenue in Redland Gardens; along Adams Avenue and Collier Avenue in Redland Gardens Extension; and along Alice, 59th, and 60th Streets between Adams Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard in the El Central Heights subdivision, among others. Open lots remained between these groupings and individual homes until later in the 1930s, early 1940s, and into the post-World War II period.

The area descriptions included with the 1936 federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) survey also provides a sense of the development by this time (Figure 18). Created as part of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's New Deal programs to stimulate the economy during the Great Depression, HOLC assigned grades to residential neighborhoods in cities throughout the country. The purpose of the grading was to reflect each

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neighborhood's "mortgage security;" that is, the risk for mortgage lenders when determining who should receive loans and which areas were safe investments, in a practice later known as "redlining." With input from local real estate professionals, HOLC assigned one of four lettered categories -- A for First Grade/Best (green); B for Second Grade/Still Desirable (blue), C for Third Grade/Definitely Declining (yellow), and D for Fourth Grade/Hazardous (red) -- based on factors such as topography, building age, housing types, and most notoriously, racial and ethnic identity and the economic class of the residents.

HOLC grading systems reflected the discriminatory attitudes of the period and used language about the "desirability" of an area to reflect the class, race, and income of its residents. White-collar or professional workers, who were assumed to be white, and owned their homes would receive the highest ratings. Areas with high concentrations or a mix of people of color, immigrants, and the working class, received lower grades. Additionally, old or aging building stock was largely perceived by HOLC to entail rundown, blighted, or undesirable neighborhoods and also received lower grades.

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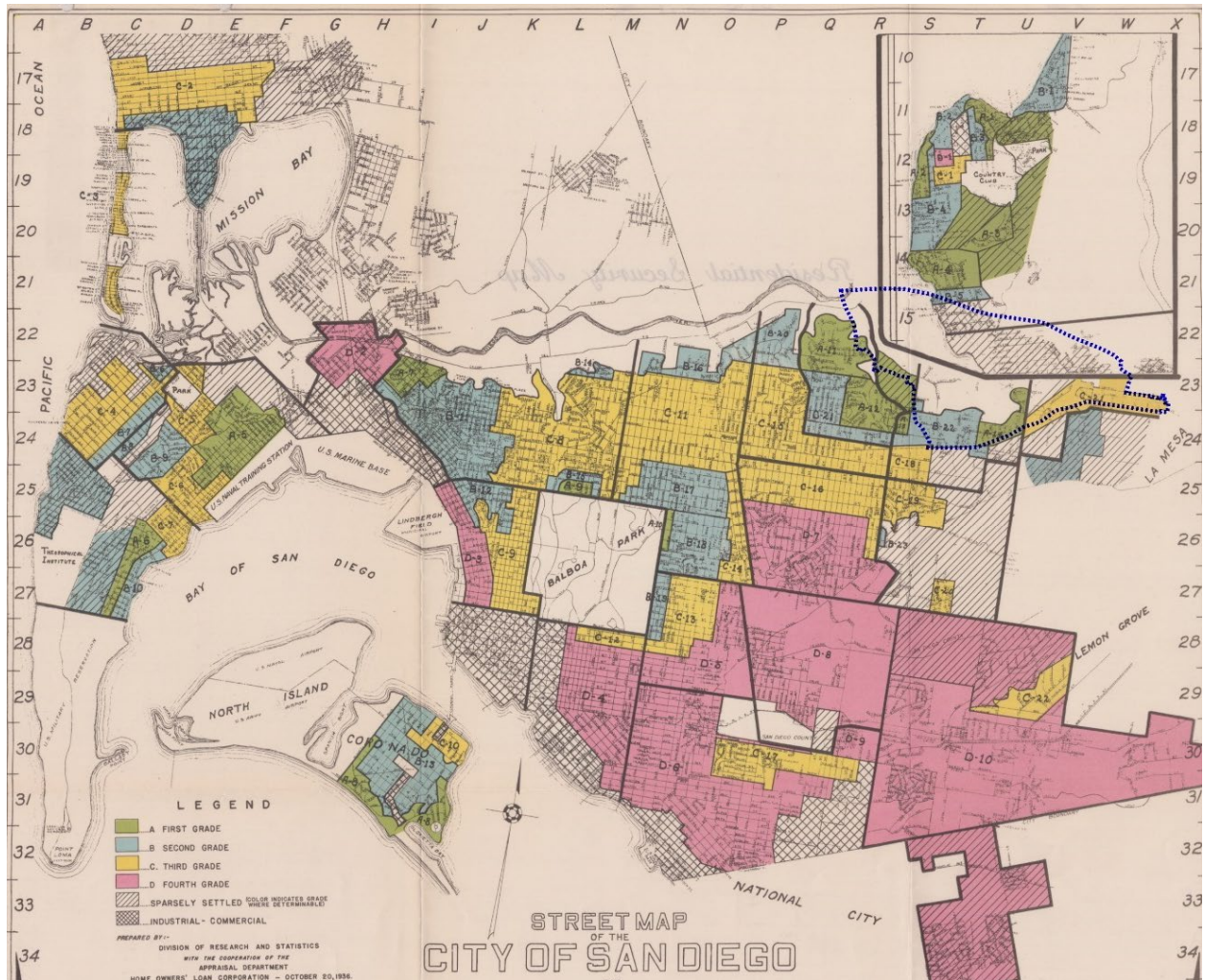


Figure 18. Home Owner's Loan Corporation's 1936 map and detail of the City of San Diego. Approximate boundary of College Area called out with dashed outline. Source: Mapping Inequalities.

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In College Area, HOLC assigned its two highest grades to the developments just north of El Cajon Bl. with newer housing and higher-income residents (Figure 18). The area description for the El Cerrito and College Park tracts (A-14, green) stated,

[G]enerally level with slight slopes and some canyons. Residents are business and professional people and State College teachers [...] Homes, for the most part, are stucco one and two stories [...] They are almost entirely owner occupied with probably 5% rented. Building restrictions \$3000 minimum. [...] Area fronts on El Cajon Boulevard, the State Highway to the East; along which runs a bus line. New State College contiguous to this area, which has been the reason for its rapid development. Homes for the most part have been constructed during the past two or three years. Approximately 15% developed, with a large amount of development and construction of homes at this time. Development moving North toward State College. All City conveniences in, with under-ground conduits for light wires, etc. [...]⁶²

The area description for Redland Gardens (B-22, blue), noted it was about 50 percent developed with the average age of construction as approximately eight years. Its architecture was not as uniform as the neighboring El Cerrito Heights and College Park tracts just to the east. The area was 80% owner-occupied and 20% rented, and residents were also “white collar classes, businessmen and professional people,” which may indicate residents were associated with the relocated College, though the text does not directly mention the College as it did for the El Cerrito and College Park tracts.

The Redland Gardens area had a “high blue” rating compared to the west side of the same B-22 section that was, “populated with people of a lower income range,” and to the southeast corner that was located south of El Cajon Boulevard, “which as a rule has a lower type of development than the property North of El Cajon.”⁶³ As the descriptions did not mention the race, ethnicity, or immigration status of the residents, it is assumed that the population was homogenously white (except for domestic workers, if any). Sources show Redland Gardens

⁶² “A-14” San Diego area description, Home Owners’ Loan Corporation, available at Mapping Inequality, accessed April 6 2021, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=downloads>.

⁶³ “B-22” San Diego area description, Home Owners’ Loan Corporation, available at Mapping Inequality, accessed April 6 2021, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=downloads>.

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is known to have restricted residents to “Members of the white race only” as was typical in the majority of San Diego subdivisions at the time.⁶⁴

With these favorable ratings, these subdivisions could benefit from other New Deal programs, such as those offered through the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Among its programs were the issuance of insurance to protect builders and mortgage lenders from losses, and thus encouraging construction that would stimulate the economy and employ workers. Homeowners could secure loans to purchase these new housing with FHA-backed mortgages. To qualify for FHA insurance, builders employed FHA minimum standards for single-family homes. The Minimal Traditional style – which evolved from the FHA’s minimum standards – became the most common style for residential construction during the Great Depression and World War II.⁶⁵

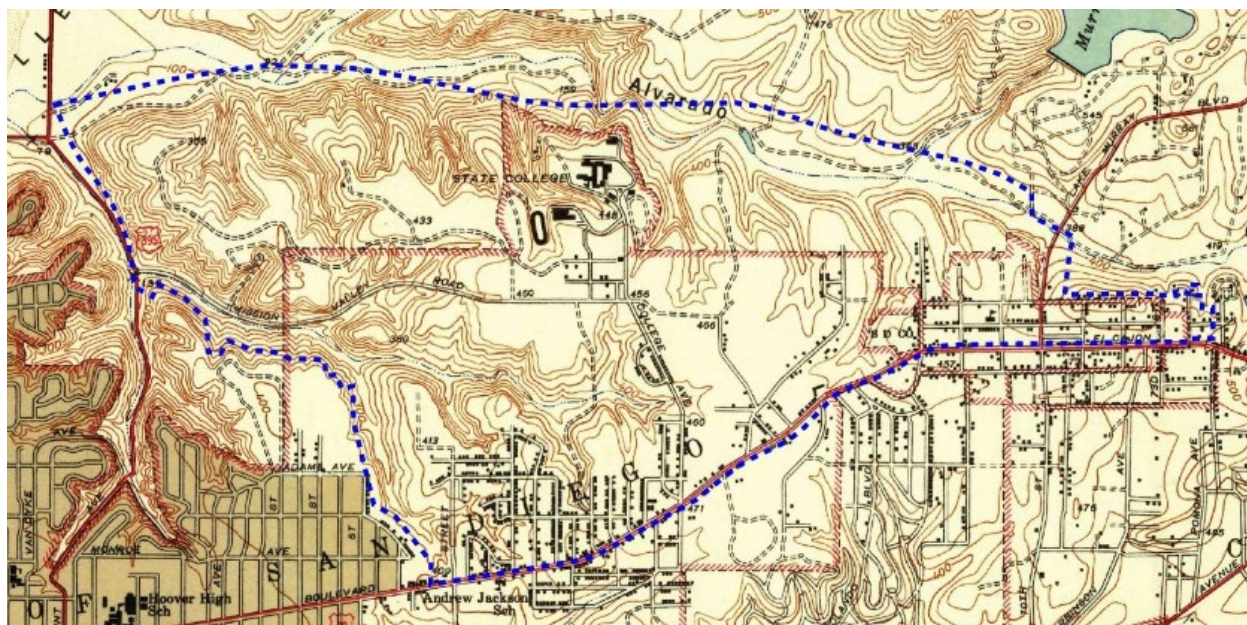


Figure 19. Topographic map of the modern College Area CPA (boundary in dashed blue line), showing the development by 1942, over a decade after SDSU created its campus in the northern part of the area. Each black dot represents a building. Note the San Diego and La Mesa city boundaries in red hatch. Areas outside of the hatch marks remain in San Diego County jurisdiction. Source: La Mesa, CA 1942 map, USGS TopoViewer.

By 1942, the 1920s subdivisions along El Cajon Boulevard had infilled with new housing and expanded their streets, often around the ravines that remained undeveloped (Figure 19). Much of the infill construction appeared as Minimal Traditional designs, likely as a result of

⁶⁴ “Building Restrictions in Redland Gardens,” undated document, Real Estate Development > Redland Gardens files, San Diego History Center.

⁶⁵ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 203-205.

available FHA programs. The presence of the military in San Diego during the critical ramp-up of industry and production prior to entering World War II helped to soften the impact of the Great Depression and allowed San Diego, including this eastern edge, to continue to grow—albeit more slowly than the 1920s boom had predicted.⁶⁶

The City Planning Commission's "Study of San Diego Growth in New Residential Units," documented 1,142 housing units built between 1931 and 1940, a percent gain of 135.9%, among these 1920s subdivisions.⁶⁷ This included the College Park subdivision, where the growth was more directly associated with the College's relocation and growth (refer to **Theme: Commercial Development (ca. 1910-1974).**

La Mesa Colony Annexation and Infill

The area of the planned townsite of La Mesa Colony had been subdivided for nearly forty years by the time the 1920s subdivision maps were filed in the western end of the College Area. The development in this eastern end remained piecemeal and gradual, with residences erected as infill as needed by property owners. Although La Mesa Colony was annexed into the City of San Diego in 1927 and 1928, its development was more tied to the development patterns and commercial presence of nearby La Mesa and the Flume Company until the post-World War II period.⁶⁸

The 1936 HOLC map rated the area east of College Avenue, including the original La Mesa Colony townsite, as the third level (C-21, yellow). The area description said,

This area lies along El Cajon Blvd. east of A-14 or the State College area. Sparsely built up with more or less attractive homes of approximately four to seven rooms, certain portions of the area, especially along El Cajon Blvd. are quite desirable. The eastern portion is in a Mattoon district, which fact has more or less retarded development. In the eastern portion the topography of the land is level and slightly rolling with a few canyons. Building for the most part is concentrated along El Cajon Avenue [*sic*] with a few small settlements north of El Cajon. Even in the face of the Mattoon situation, the area is

⁶⁶ "Building Boom Hits College Area; Many Attractive Homes Constructed in Suburban District," *San Diego Union*, January 26, 1936; May, May, and Johnson, "Historical Nomination of the Baron X. Kouch/Norma Mayer Schuh Speculation House #2," 10.

⁶⁷ City Planning Commission of San Diego, "Study of San Diego Growth in New Residential Units: 10 years, 1931-1940 inclusive," City of San Diego Historic Planning Maps, accessed April 12, 2021, <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/digitalarchives/pdf/historicalmaps/sdcgumc.pdf>.

⁶⁸ "Ordinance No. 11776," *San Diego Evening Tribune*, June 22, 1928.; "Council Accepts La Mesas Colony," *San Diego Union*, June 19, 1928.

favorably regarded and has had some recent developments. The residents are for the most part all white people, belonging to clerical group, mechanics, semi-professionals, and small-business men [...] Very small portion of area is restricted as to building and for that reason there is no real uniformity as to architectural design. Certain portions of area are restricted by deed to a single family dwelling, with building restrictions of \$3000 minimum. This is a difficult area to classify as it is hard to say just what development will take place and what type of development in the immediate future. Were the Mattoon situation adjusted, the area would in all probability develop quite rapidly. However, El Cajon Blvd. has definitely declined from a residential standpoint as this street is being improved with small businesses...⁶⁹

"Mattoon district" is a reference to the Mattoon Act, the state legislation officially called the Acquisition and Improvement Act that passed in 1925. The act was a way to streamline and finance public works by taxing the landowners in an "improvement district" to pay for the improvement bonds. Unfortunately, the result too often was excessive assessments, tax delinquencies, and foreclosures, which appeared to be one of the main reasons for designating this area in the third category. The Mattoon Act was repealed in 1931, and San Diego County voters passed a Mattoon Act recovery bond in 1936 to buy out the foreclosed properties, around the time of this description.⁷⁰

The residential development in the eastern end of the College Area featured a greater mix of styles reflecting its earlier development and continued infill growth into the early 1940s. Vernacular cottages, modest Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival and other Period Revival styles, and Minimal Traditional houses are all present. However, given its lower HOLC rating, investment through FHA program does not appear as prevalent as in the western part of the College Area. The same City Planning Commission study of residential unit growth found only 125 units added to La Mesa Colony between 1931 and 1940, representing a 52.1% growth.⁷¹

⁶⁹ "C-21" San Diego area description, Home Owners' Loan Corporation, available at Mapping Inequality, accessed April 6, 2021, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58&text=downloads..>

⁷⁰ Hadley Meares, "Behind the 1925 Law that Almost Stopped SoCal Development," Curbed Los Angeles, March 11, 2014, <https://la.curbed.com/2014/3/11/10134290/behind-the-1925-law-that-almost-stopped-socal-development-1>; and James D. Newland, "Rolando, La Mesa's Lost Neighbor," Patch, posted April 13, 2012, <https://patch.com/california/lamesa/rolando-la-mesa-s-lost-neighbor-where-you-ll-love-to-c3bf05f786>

⁷¹ City Planning Commission of San Diego, "Study of San Diego Growth in New Residential Units."

Zoning System Introduced

As the City of San Diego implemented a new zoning system in the early 1930s, the majority of College Area—both subdivided and undeveloped areas—were zoned as single-family residential, with limited locations designated for commercial development (refer to **Theme: Commercial Development (ca. 1910-1974)** for more information on the commercial zoning of the area) (Figure 20). Limited areas were zoned for multi-family residential, including the Highland Garden subdivision, the southern edge of Redland Gardens just north of El Cajon Boulevard, the north side of Montezuma Road near College Avenue, and the west half of the El Retiro subdivision just west of College Avenue for R-4 higher density housing; the residential blocks of the La Mesa Colony townsite was zoned R-2 for duplexes or two units on a lot.⁷² The new zoning did not immediately change development patterns—nor did it significantly alter the already built single-family residential areas in Highland Gardens and Redland Gardens—but it set the stage for the slow but steady construction of residential housing in the 1930s catalyzed by the relocation of San Diego State College to the area, and for the explosive growth of suburban tract housing in the undeveloped areas of the modern College Area after World War II.

⁷² City of San Diego, “Zoning Plan: Fairmont, College Park, and Vicinity,” Map, April 1932.; ⁷² City of San Diego, “Zoning Plan: La Mesa Colony – Vicinity,” Map, April 1932.

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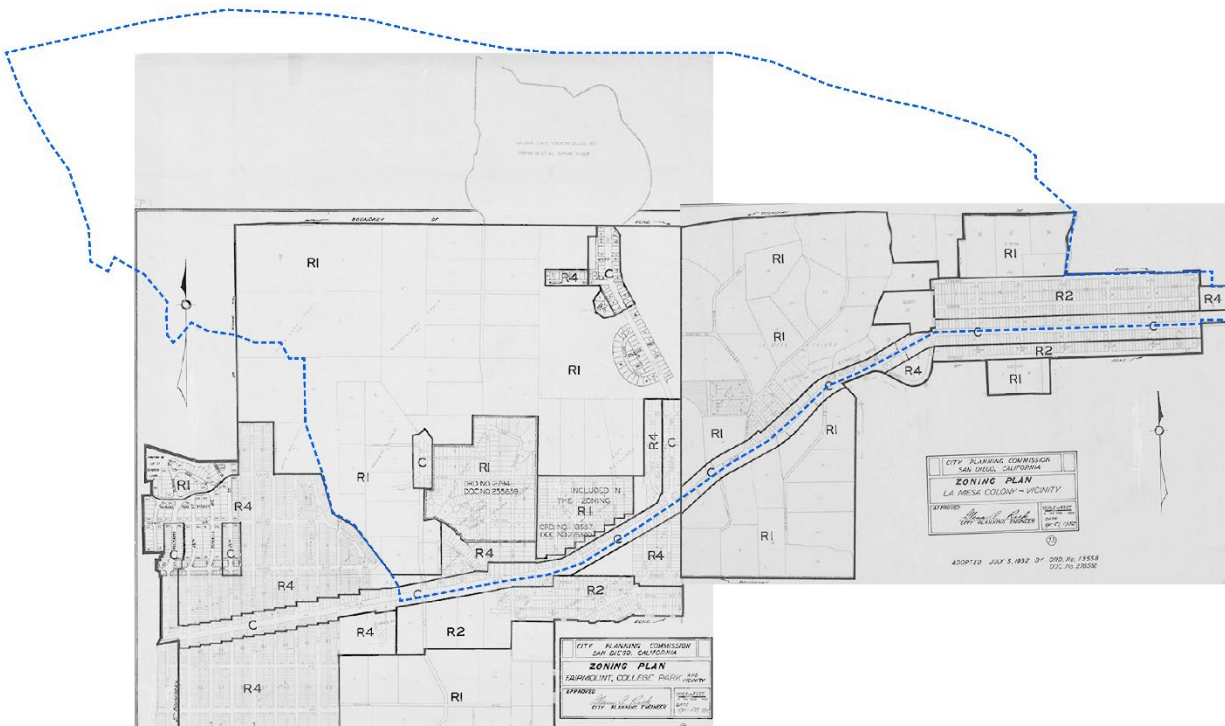


Figure 20. 1930 and 1932 zoning maps of modern College Area with current approximate boundary of the College Area shown in dashed blue line. Source: San Diego City Clerk's Archive. Edited by Page & Turnbull, 2023.

Property Types

Individual Single-Family Residences

Individual single-family residences constructed in the College Area before the relocation of San Diego State College in 1931 are typically associated with a handful of tracts, including La Mesa Colony (1887), Redland Gardens (1923), Redland Gardens Extension (1923), Highland Garden (1924), Acacia Park (1926), El Cerrito Heights (1926), Cajon Terrace (1927), and El Retiro (1927). Few pre-1920s residential properties appear to survive.

Within La Mesa Colony, a number of small freestanding, wood frame, late nineteenth and early twentieth century vernacular cottages with rustic channel siding and small roofed entrances with decorative beams are extant and are likely the oldest extant structures in the College Area.

Single-family residential buildings constructed in the 1920s within the various early subdivisions were typically built in the popular Period Revival styles of the era, including the dominant Spanish Colonial Revival style. Some of these buildings may be architect-designed, but most are likely builder-designed. While most were constructed in popular styles of the period, some buildings like 4749 Redland Drive within the Redland Gardens Extension, may demonstrate unusual design elements or construction techniques. 4749 Redland Drive is an

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unusual Storybook style, castle-like residence constructed in concrete and has a shallow moat separating the building from Redland Drive.

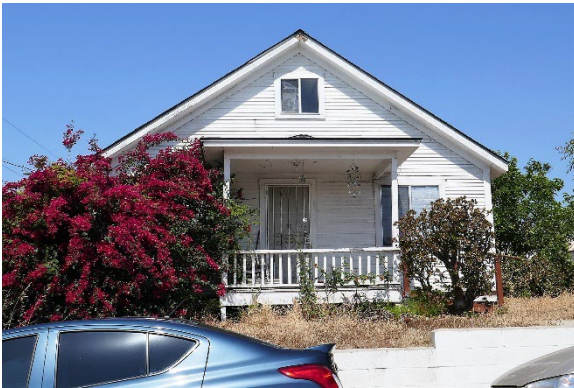


Figure 21. Examples of early single-family residences in the College Area built between 1887 and 1930. Top left: 5034 72nd Street (La Mesa Colony); Top Right: 7273 Mohawk Street (La Mesa Colony); Bottom Left: 5410 Collier Avenue (Redland Gardens Extension); Bottom Right: 4749 Redland Drive (Redland Gardens Extension).

Character-Defining Features

- Small, one-story, wood-frame, vernacular cottages, often with gabled roofs, rustic channel siding, double-hung wood windows, and small roofed entrances.
- One-story residences with Craftsman style elements and influences, such as front porches supported by columns, wood siding, wood windows, and exposed rafter tails.
- One- to two-story single-family residences built in the popular Period Revival architectural styles, such as Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission, Tudor Revival, French Eclectic, Colonial Revival, and other styles, with defining characteristics of those styles.
- Evenly setback from the street with a front garden or landscaping.

Subdivisions

The numerous single-family residences in College Area are likely not to have individual distinction, but some groupings or collections of them may be eligible as historic districts. The residential subdivisions that were established in College Area prior to the relocation of

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San Diego State College to the vicinity are limited to only seven subdivisions that were platted from 1923 to 1927. These early subdivisions may have distinct groupings of early residences that demonstrate a consistent approach to design and construction and may be a good example of the subdivision development of the period (Figure 22). Buildings would generally have been constructed in the popular Spanish Colonial Revival, other Period Revival styles, and infilled with Minimal Traditional style.



Figure 22: Example of an early subdivision developed at Highland Gardens that could yield a potential historic district with additional study.

Character-Defining Features of Subdivisions

- Repetitive or unifying site landscaping in the public and semi-public realm, such as uniform building setbacks from the street, front lawns, street trees, planting strips, medians, and driveways.
- One- to two-story single-family houses.
- Collection of houses that display similar or a varied range of architectural styles that date to the period in which the neighborhood was originally developed, typically Period Revival styles, such as Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission, Tudor Revival, French Eclectic, Colonial Revival, and other styles.

Eligibility Standards

Properties associated with early residential development in the College Area may be eligible for listing in the national, state, or local historic register under one of the following criteria:

- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element): An early or rare example of residential development in the College Area associated with and within the early subdivisions, such as La Mesa Colony or one of the 1920s subdivisions (map filed in the 1920s with significant development prior to 1945).
 - The property should retain integrity of location within the associated tract, sufficient integrity of design, materials, and/or workmanship to be associated

- with its period of construction, and integrity of feeling and association as an early single-family residence in the College Area.
- Integrity of setting may be compromised, as the subdivisions filled around these early homes after 1945 and landscaping changed over time.
- Some flexibility for the integrity of materials and/or workmanship may be possible if the property is a particularly rare, early, or unusual example, so long as the essential form, scale, and massing of the building remains.
- NRHP B / CRHR 2 / SDRHR B (Persons): Association with a significant person in national, state, or local history.
 - The property should retain some, if not all seven aspects of integrity.
 - Integrity of design and workmanship may not be as important if a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today.
 - More flexibility of integrity is available to properties eligible for the local register.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR C (Architecture): Excellent, unusual, or rare example of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or for NRHP C/ CRHR 3, possesses high artistic values, or for SDRHR C, is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
 - Property types that are rare for the College Area, such as late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century vernacular cottages, may be eligible by virtue of their rarity.
 - Few early single-family residences are likely to be eligible for the National Register or California Register as an excellent example of a style or type of architecture as most of these early residential buildings were relatively modest. Few are likely to be architect-designed. or unusual examples.
 - Most would be eligible for the San Diego Register, so long as they possess a good degree of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.
 - Some level of integrity of location, setting, feeling, and/or association are also necessary.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR D (Work of a Master): Representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman.
 - Due to the modesty of most early residential buildings constructed in the College Area, the identification of a notable architect or designer is unlikely, but significant local builders or craftspeople may emerge with additional study.
 - Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are most relevant for eligibility under the Architecture and Work of Master criteria.

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- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR F (Historic Districts): Well-defined group of single-family residences, related geographically, historically, and/or aesthetically, and which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the College Area.
 - Individual contributors should have a good level of integrity overall.
 - District boundaries may relate to the original subdivision or tract boundaries, or closely related adjacent tracts.
 - Residences may have a mix of architectural styles, including 1920s and 1930s Period Revival styles, and 1930s to early 1940s Minimal Traditional designs that feature a similar scale, massing, setback, and other elements common to the neighborhood.

Study List

The following properties were identified during the research and preparation of this theme. A conclusion has not been reached regarding the significance of these properties, which should be evaluated in the future on a site-specific basis to determine their significance or lack thereof. Single-Family residential properties are listed first, followed by subdivisions.

Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
5029	67th Street	4681412500	SFR, 1887-1945	Vernacular Cottage	La Mesa Colony
5034	72 nd Street	4690601200	SFR, 1887-1945	Vernacular Cottage	La Mesa Colony
6841	Mohawk Street	4681520600	SFR, 1887-1945	Vernacular Cottage	La Mesa Colony
6849	Mohawk Street	4681520700	SFR, 1887-1945	Vernacular Cottage	La Mesa Colony
6857	Mohawk Street	4681520800	SFR, 1887-1945	Vernacular Cottage	La Mesa Colony
6881	Mohawk Street	4681521100	SFR, 1887-1945	Vernacular Cottage	La Mesa Colony
7273	Mohawk Street	4690911000	SFR, 1887-1945	Vernacular Cottage	La Mesa Colony
4749	Redland Drive	4664301900	SFR, 1887-1945	Storybook style	Redland Gardens Extension
5410	Collier Avenue	4664111200	SFR, 1887-1945	Craftsman	Redland Gardens Extension

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Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
5422	Collier Avenue	4664110700	SFR, 1887-1945	Tudor Revival	Redland Gardens Extension
Along Berting Street, Gilbert Drive, and Dayton Street			Subdivision	Spanish Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional	Highland Gardens (1924)
El Centro Drive, 55 th and 56 th Streets north of Madison Avenue, Adams Avenue, Collier Avenue			Subdivision	Spanish Colonial Revival, Period Revival, Craftsman, Minimal Traditional	Redland Gardens (1923), Redland Gardens Extension (1923)
El Centro Drive, Alice, 59 th , and 60 th Streets between Adams Avenue and El Cajon Boulevard			Subdivision	Spanish Colonial Revival, Period Revival, Minimal Traditional	El Cerrito Heights (1926)

Theme: Commercial Development (ca. 1910–1974)

Compared to single-family residences, commercial properties account for a small percentage of lots in the College Area. The primary commercial area is along El Cajon Boulevard, the north side of which is within the College Area CPA. A smaller cluster of commercial properties is at College Avenue and Montezuma Road.

Early Development of El Cajon Avenue

The College Area CPA's southern border of El Cajon Boulevard, was significant for its role in connecting the growing City of San Diego to points east. Today's El Cajon Boulevard was first a dirt road that served as the main wagon route between the city and rural settlements and towns like La Mesa further east.⁷³ By 1899, El Cajon Avenue (it would not become El Cajon Boulevard until 1937) was advertised as "the best road in the county."⁷⁴ While it had not been paved, it was graded, and the San Diego Electric Railway Company had publicized plans for the installation of an electric streetcar along El Cajon. The presence of this arterial road was the catalyst for residential development along the southern boundaries of the College Area in the 1920s, as the City of San Diego's boundary marched eastward (refer to **Theme: Early Residential Development (1886-1945)** for additional information on these 1920s subdivisions).

While the electric streetcar was never constructed, El Cajon Avenue remained the primary route for moving between the coast and inland towns. By the 1910s, the growing availability and affordability of the personal automobile increased the importance of the road as an arterial for regional travel. Early automobile owners reportedly used El Cajon Avenue to stage informal races (Figure 23).

In October 1912, El Cajon Avenue figured prominently in a formal race between the cities of San Diego and Los Angeles to determine which city would become the terminus of a transcontinental highway.⁷⁵ A race to Phoenix, Arizona from each city was undertaken to determine the fastest and most efficient route.⁷⁶ San Diego's win secured the city's (and El

⁷³ Donald Covington. "Once Upon a Time in North Park: El Cajon Boulevard, Old U.S. Highway 80," North Park Historical Society, March 2001. Accessed May 2, 2021, http://www.northparkhistory.org/documents/articles/20010300_events_el_cajon_boulevard.pdf.

⁷⁴ "Growth of La Mesa," *The San Diego Union*, January 2, 1899.

⁷⁵ Covington. "Once Upon a Time in North Park: El Cajon Boulevard, Old U.S. Highway 80."

⁷⁶ Richard Crawford, "The Great Race," excerpted from *San Diego Yesterday*, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), and reproduced on the author's website, *San Diego Yesterday*. Accessed May 14, 2021, <http://www.sandiegoyesterday.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Great-Race2-1.pdf>; Covington, "Once Upon a Time in North Park: El Cajon Boulevard, Old U.S. Highway 80."

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Cajon Avenue's) role in the transcontinental highway system and would serve as a catalyst for the development of the College Area in the following decades.



Figure 23: ca. 1912 photograph of a race on El Cajon Avenue. This location appears to be within the University Heights neighborhood in the City of San Diego, several miles west of the modern College Area. The San Diego Normal School (precursor to San Diego Teachers College that relocated to the College Area) is visible in the background at Park Boulevard, the western terminus of El Cajon Avenue. Source: San Diego City Clerk's Office.

The announcement that San Diego would be the location of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition led to several infrastructure and development projects that presumed permanent increased tourism and a wave of new residents. For the Exposition, El Cajon Avenue would be an established route to the fairgrounds for visitors arriving from the Imperial Valley and locations farther east. In 1913, in preparation for the Exposition, El Cajon Avenue was paved from Park Avenue to the eastern edge of the San Diego city limits.⁷⁷ The eastern city limits at the time abutted the City of East San Diego (now the City Heights neighborhood), which incorporated as an independent city in 1912 and was located between the City of San Diego and the present-day College Area (Figure 24). East San Diego remained a separate municipality until a popular vote in favor of annexation in 1923 incorporated it into the city boundaries of San Diego.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ "Notice of Street Work: El Cajon Avenue," *The Evening Tribune*, October 18, 1913, p. 19.

⁷⁸ "East San Diego Formally Annexed; All Pleased," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 30, 1923.; "Councilman and Heads of Departments Officially Take over Thriving Suburb" *San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 30, 1923.

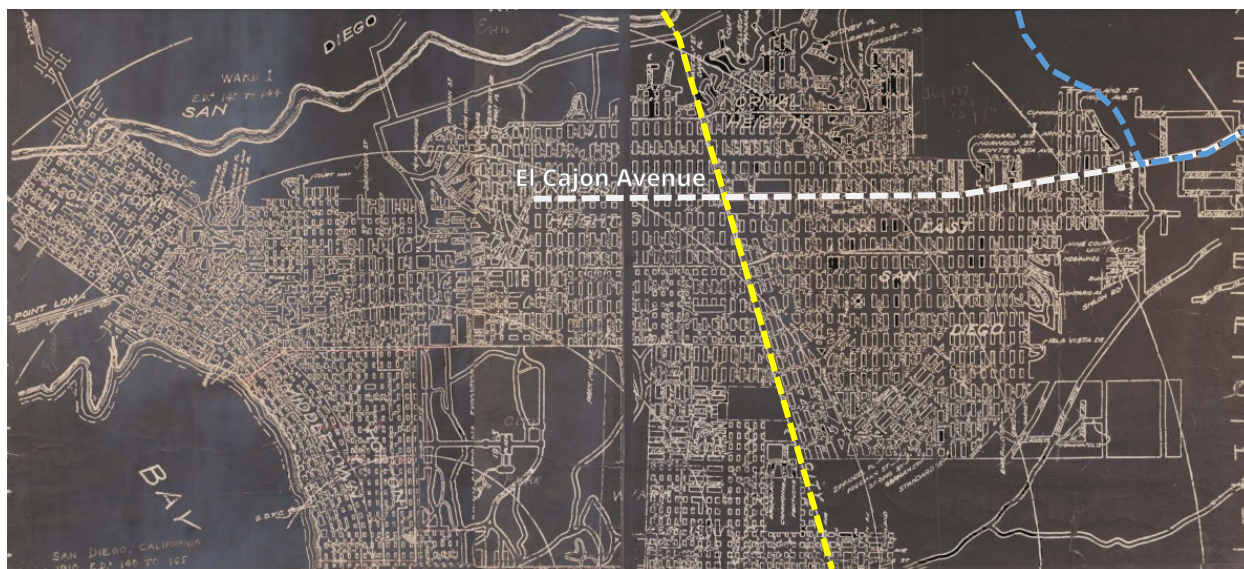


Figure 24: Circa 1914 map showing City of San Diego's eastern boundary (dashed yellow line) and the approximate western boundary of College Area shown with a dashed blue line. The independent City of East San Diego is located between these two boundaries. Source: July 1914 Stokes Street Map, courtesy of the San Diego City Clerk's archive.

While College Area saw little direct development as a result of the 1915-1916 Exposition, the vast lands on the mesas to the east of the city limits were given increased visibility and were recognized as future opportunities for development.⁷⁹

In 1926, the Automobile Association of State Highway Officials standardized the highway system. With this change, El Cajon Avenue became reclassified as U.S. Highway 80 along the southern transcontinental highway.⁸⁰ This designation spurred increased automobile-oriented development of El Cajon, and advertisements of the late 1920s aimed to attract additional interest in the street as the "Backbone of San Diego."⁸¹ Developers of the period understood that San Diego's eastward growth would soon reach the College Area and advertised the parcels along El Cajon Avenue as a "vast expanse of level desirable land," and "the only direction in which San Diego as a city can enjoy any further development."⁸²

⁷⁹ City of San Diego, College Area Community Plan, 1989, (City of San Diego Planning Department, 1989), 3.

⁸⁰ U.S. Geological Survey, "United States System of Highways: adopted for uniform marking by the American Association of State Highway Officials," (Map), November 11, 1926. Available from the Map Collections of the University of Texas at Arlington Library through *The Portal to Texas History* (a digital repository of UNT Libraries), accessed April 16, 2021, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht298433/>.

⁸¹ "El Cajon Blvd." *San Diego Union*, November 25, 1928.; "El Cajon Boulevard: The Backbone of the San Diego," Advertisement. *San Diego Union*, November 25, 1928.

⁸² "El Cajon Blvd." *San Diego Union*, November 25, 1928.

Although an electric streetcar was planned to serve the College Area along El Cajon Boulevard as early as 1900, the growing importance of the automobile as the primary method of personal transportation and travel resulted in the change of development patterns from those of the streetcar suburb of the previous century to the automobile-centric development of the twentieth century. El Cajon Avenue therefore developed as an automobile-centered commercial street.⁸³

This is not to say that the redevelopment of El Cajon from a graded country road to a paved highway lined with commercial businesses happened overnight. Development remained slow and inconsistent, and most commercial development occurred as infill construction between existing residential and agricultural uses as more development came to the area in the 1930s and 1940s.

Slow Commercial Development of the 1930s and 1940s

Commercial development in the College Area in the 1930s remained focused along El Cajon Avenue in part due to the adoption of commercial and residential zoning plans in 1930 and 1932 that zoned most of the community for residential use. Limited areas were zoned for commercial development including both sides of El Cajon Avenue, a portion of 54th Street in the vicinity of Adams and Collier avenues at the western edge of the Redland Garden Extension subdivision (never developed as commercial), and two sections of College Avenue from El Cajon to Arosa Street and at the intersection of College Avenue with Montezuma Road (then called Mission Valley Road) (Figure 25). A large commercial shopping center project designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style was proposed for the intersection of College Avenue and Montezuma Road as part of the Bell-Lloyd development. However, this project was never completed, and the area did not develop as a secondary commercial core of College Area until the postwar period.⁸⁴

⁸³ Anne V. O'Connor-Ruth, "Mercantile to McDonalds," *The Journal of San Diego History*, v. 38, n. 3, (Summer 1992), accessed April 16, 2021, <https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1992/july/mercantile/>.

⁸⁴ Bevil, "From Grecian Columns to Spanish Towers".

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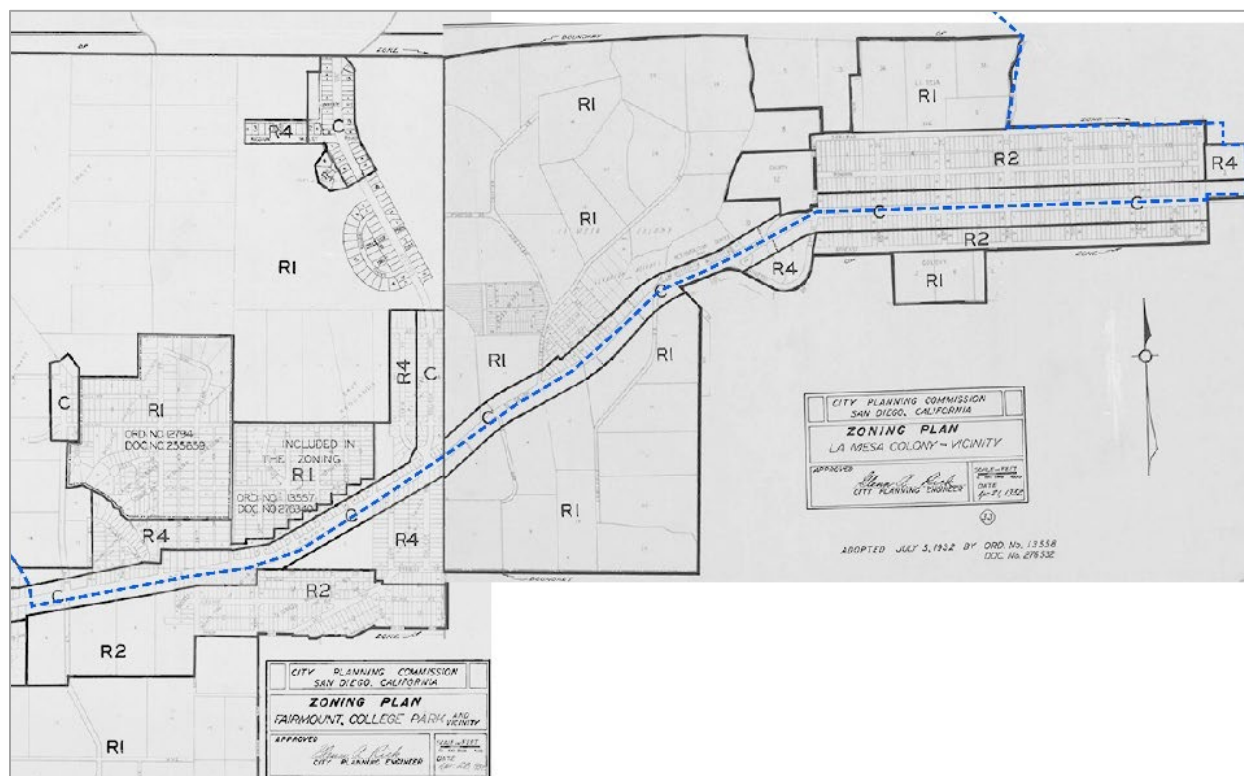


Figure 25: Detail of the 1930 and 1932 zoning maps of modern College Area with current approximate boundary of the College Area shown in dashed blue line. This detail focuses on the location of commercial zoning along El Cajon. Refer to Figure 20 for full view of map. Source: San Diego City Clerk's Archive. Edited by Page & Turnbull, 2023.

According to the 1929 Street and Householders' Guide within the San Diego City Directory, businesses along El Cajon within the College Area included gas and service stations, real estate and other offices, restaurants, plant nurseries, and fruit and grocery stores interspersed with residential buildings.⁸⁵ Given that this two-and-a-half mile stretch included only approximately 100 buildings (spread between both sides of the street), much of the land along El Cajon consisted of unbuilt parcels. An examination of city directory listings along El Cajon indicates that growth, while slow, was steady, and it appears that approximately 10 new listings (both residential and commercial) were added each year.⁸⁶ Commercial uses diversified as they increased, and by the late 1930s included barbershops and beauty salons, doctors' offices, kennels, feed stores, liquor stores, hardware stores, and pharmacies.

⁸⁵ Frye & Smith, *Official San Diego 1929 City Directory including San Diego County*, (San Diego: San Diego Directory Co., 1929), 946. Note that 1929 was the first year in which a City Directory included the entire length of El Cajon within the modern College Area.

⁸⁶ In 1935, there were approximately 140 listings along El Cajon from 54th Street to approximately Keeney Street, and in 1940 this had risen to approximately 190 listings.

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In 1937, the street was officially renamed El Cajon Boulevard and was widened and repaved.⁸⁷ The improvements in 1937 were partially undertaken due to deferred maintenance of the Great Depression and to recognize that El Cajon Boulevard was a major entrance to the city for visitors coming from the east. Businesses along El Cajon that catered to car maintenance and service had steadily increased in number in the 1930s with gas stations, repair shops and tire shops. In 1929, this section of El Cajon had six gas stations, and by 1940 there were nine gas stations, one tire shop, and two auto courts that provided lodging for travelers.

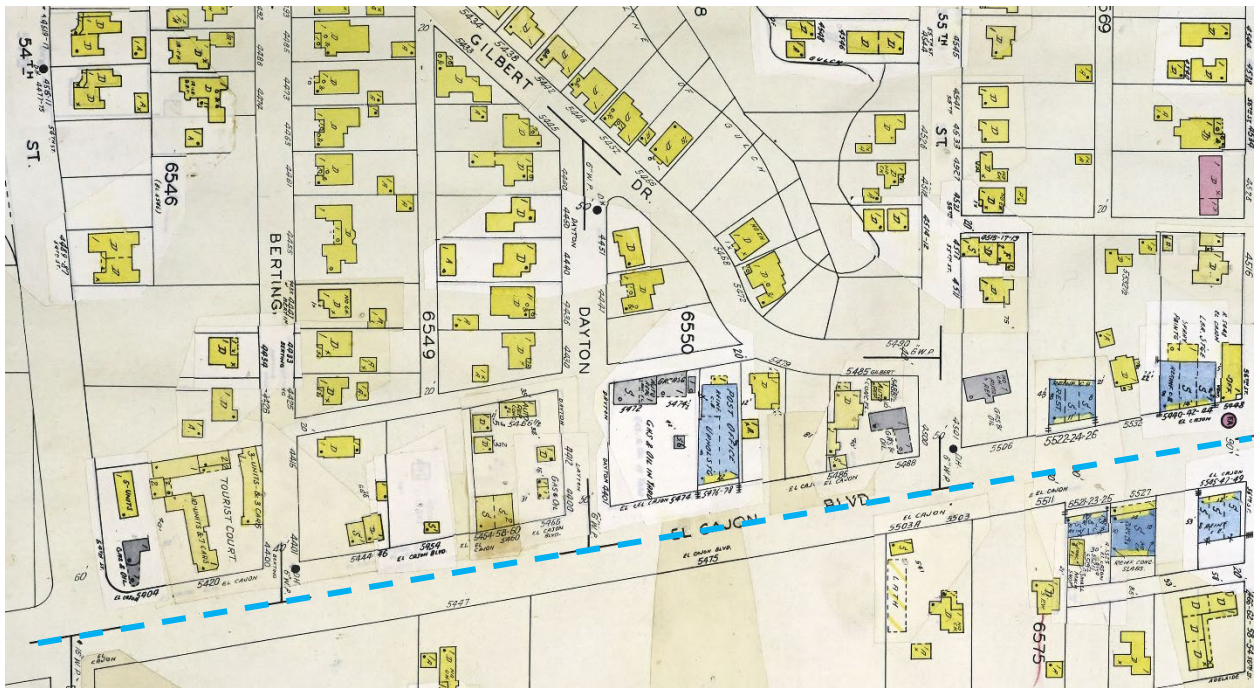


Figure 26. Example of commercial development along El Cajon Boulevard as seen in the 1950 Sanborn Insurance Map. Blue dashed line indicates the southern boundary of the modern College Area CPA. Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1950, volume 4, page 525.

By 1950, El Cajon Boulevard was significantly more commercial in character than it had been in previous decades, but the street had not become a dense commercial district. Vacant parcels between buildings, and a generally mixed-use character with residences and businesses remained. This can be seen in Sanborn Map Company maps from 1950 (Figure 26). Due to the later development and redevelopment of El Cajon Boulevard with infill commercial construction of the Postwar period, very few early commercial buildings from the 1920s through the 1940s survive. Those that do survive are one-story buildings located close to the street—either with no setback or a minor setback—and are typically isolated

⁸⁷ Covington. "Once Upon a Time in North Park: El Cajon Boulevard, Old U.S. Highway 80."

from each other. The vast majority of commercial buildings in the College Area have been erected since 1950.

Notable commercial building typologies that defined El Cajon Boulevard in the postwar period include auto-oriented tourist courts and motels, as well as drive-thru commercial buildings, both discussed in more detail under Property Types. Other neighborhood-serving commercial buildings also appeared in the 1950s and 1960s, including banks, furniture stores, restaurants, small-scale office buildings, and mortuaries.

Freeway Replaces Highway 80

Alvarado Canyon Road, along the northern boundary of the College Area CPA, within Alvarado Canyon, was built between 1947 and 1950 to allow traffic to bypass Highway 80 (El Cajon Boulevard) through the College Area and La Mesa. Increasing congestion caused the road to be widened to four lanes by 1953, and in 1955, it was converted to an eight-lane freeway, variously called U.S. 80, Mission Valley Freeway or Alvarado Freeway, and now called the Kumeyaay Highway.⁸⁸ Various on- and off-ramps were constructed to allow access to the east-west freeway from north-south roads including Fairmont Avenue Expressway, College Avenue, and 70th Street.⁸⁹ Construction of the highway and its multiple expansions took decades, but traffic was slowly rerouted from the old route of Highway 80 to the freeway, which was renumbered as Interstate 8 (I-8) in 1964.⁹⁰ Between 1964 and 1974, the route of Highway 80, including its section along El Cajon Boulevard was gradually decommissioned, drawing traffic away from this historic route through the College Area.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Heritage Architecture & Planning, *Mission Valley Community Plan, Historic Context Statement*, (Draft, dated January 31, 2019), 3-18.

⁸⁹ 70th Street off/on-ramp to provide access from El Cajon Boulevard to the Alvarado Freeway was planned in 1959. Refer to map of planned highway extension. City of San Diego, City Engineer's Office, "Plans for the Improvement of 70th Street," Road Survey, RS 01588, 70th Street, Product ID 164414, accessed April 16, 2021, https://srs.sandiegocounty.gov/#/s?a=c&q=*.

⁹⁰ "Interstate 8," California Highways, accessed June 21, 2021, <https://www.cahighways.org/ROUTE008.html>.

⁹¹ While US 80 was officially decommissioned in 1964, it remained signed in California until 1974 when all section of I-8 Highway were complete. "US Highway 80: The Broadway of North America," Historic California U.S. Highways (website), accessed April 16, 2021, <http://gbcnet.com/ushighways/US80/index.html>.

College Area and Montezuma Road

The small section of commercial development that occurred at the intersection of College Avenue and Montezuma Road was mixed. Aerial photographs from 1953 and 1963 show primarily residential development around this intersection. By the 1974 aerial photograph, some of the earlier residential development had been redeveloped as small-scale commercial buildings (Figure 27).



Figure 27. Corner of College Avenue and Montezuma Road in 1963 (left) and 1974 (right) when commercial development replaced earlier residential or vacant lots. Source: Flight CAS-SD, Frame 5-30, 1963 (left) and Flight AMI-SD 74, Frame 7017, February 1974. Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection.

Property Types

Early Commercial Buildings, 1926–1945

The early commercial properties along El Cajon Boulevard from 1926 to World War II tended to be small-scale, one- to two-story retail (store) buildings built to the sidewalk and at times angled to follow the lot lines and street. A handful of these wood frame, brick, or concrete buildings remain as modest, neighborhood-serving commercial buildings. At least one is in the Streamline Moderne style. Some appear to retain the original footprint of the building but have been highly altered and are not recognizable as ca. 1926–1945 commercial properties. Should they be rehabilitated, and original façade materials and design uncovered, the properties may be eligible to convey their association to El Cajon Boulevard's early development in the College Area.



Figure 28. Examples of early commercial development along El Cajon Avenue, with storefronts at the sidewalk.

Character-Defining Features of Early Commercial Buildings (1926–1945):

- One- or two-story commercial buildings.
- Zero lot line setback from sidewalk.
- Wood, brick, or concrete construction.
- Regular rectilinear plans.
- Flat roofs, sometimes with rectangular or shaped parapets.
- Large display windows.
- Main public entrances facing public right-of-way, often in recessed openings.
- Minimal or vernacular expression of popular architectural styles during the period of construction.

Postwar Commercial Buildings, 1945-1974

Postwar commercial properties in the College Area are located along El Cajon Boulevard and as infill construction in some pockets throughout the area, such as at College Avenue and Montezuma Road. The properties generally consist of small-scale, one-story retail buildings to larger two-story office, retail, and commercial buildings. The buildings may be built to the sidewalk, may be set back from the street, or may be surrounded by parking or drive aisles. Two sub-types (Auto Courts and Motels, and Drive-Thru Commercial Buildings) are discussed in following sections due to their prevalence in the College Area, while additional sub-types may include (but are not limited to):

- Banks
- Restaurants
- Furniture stores
- Offices
- Mortuaries



Figure 29. Examples of postwar commercial development along El Cajon Boulevard (top four images) and those found elsewhere in College Area (bottom two images).

Character-Defining Features of Postwar Commercial Buildings (1945-1974)

- Range of building sizes, from small, one-story buildings to two-story buildings with large footprints.
- Mid-Century Modern or Late Modern in style, with variations.
- Varied roof forms, including flat, gabled, A-frame, folded-plate, cantilevered, etc.
- Large display or picture windows.
- Modern features, such as Palos Verde stone veneer cladding and decorative concrete or breeze blocks.
- Automobile infrastructure such as drive aisles and surface parking lots.
- Commercial signage oriented to the street.

Auto Courts and Motels (late 1930s-1960s)

The tourist court (variously called auto camps, tourist camps, and auto courts) was the predecessor of the “motor hotel” or motel, and first started to appear in the late 1930s as more and more Americans took to car travel and there was a vast shortage of roadside accommodations. Whether traveling for leisure, business, or out of need, people required lodging and somewhere to park their car for the night.⁹² This gave rise to the establishment of locally run (or “mom and pop” owned) tourist camps or courts. The earliest tourist courts were small, one-story, rectilinear buildings that contained a small number of rooms and had an adjacent parking lot.

As the western section of Highway 80, the construction of auto courts in the 1930s and 1940s, and later motels in the 1950s and 1960s, met the needs of travelers who were routed through College Area on their way to and from San Diego.⁹³ In 1950, the largest tourist court in College Area (6496 El Cajon Boulevard, demolished) had fifteen rooms arranged in a T-shaped building with its street-facing side set deeply back from the street to accommodate parking for thirteen vehicles (Figure 30).

⁹² Andrew Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the Great American Motel,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, (June 30, 2017), accessed May 28, 2021, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/twilight-mom-and-pop-motel-180963895/>.

⁹³ The largest tourist court in College Area had fifteen rooms with parking for thirteen vehicles in 1950. Sanborn Map Company, v. 4, p. 528, published 1940, updates to 1950.

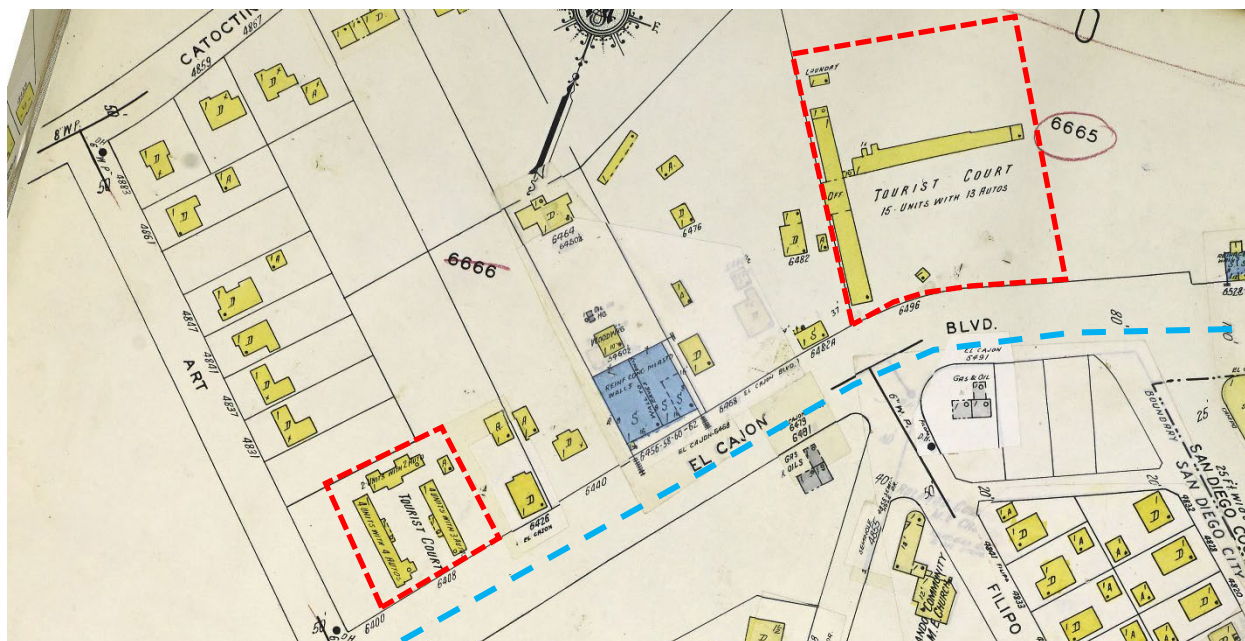


Figure 30. Tourist courts located along the north side of El Cajon Boulevard. Both buildings have been demolished but demonstrate the presence of tourist courts in the College Area in the late 1940s. Blue dashed line indicates the southern boundary of the present-day College Area. Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1950, volume 4, page 528.

Local, state, and national motel chains proliferated along most major interstates and highway routes through the 1950s and 1960s and the number of motels in operation peaked in 1964, with 61,000 motels operating nationally.⁹⁴ In College Area, this can be seen with the development of several mid-sized motels with long rectilinear volumes with L-, J-, or U-shaped plans that ringed a parking area.⁹⁵ Examples of this motel typology are shown on a 1956 Sanborn Map Company map that shows a section of El Cajon between College Avenue and 63rd Street (Figure 31). Preliminary city directory research indicates that two of the three hotels shown, the Broadview and the Westward Ho, were constructed ca. 1949. The Desert Inn was built ca. 1952.⁹⁶ All three motels are no longer extant.

⁹⁴ Wood, "The Rise and Fall of the Great American Motel," *Smithsonian Magazine*.

⁹⁵ Sanborn Map Company, v. 4, p. various from 525-572, published 1940, updates to 1961.

⁹⁶ The Desert Inn is visible in a 1953 aerial photograph from HistoricAerials.com, but is not listed in a 1952 City Directory, and is therefore likely to have been under construction in 1952.

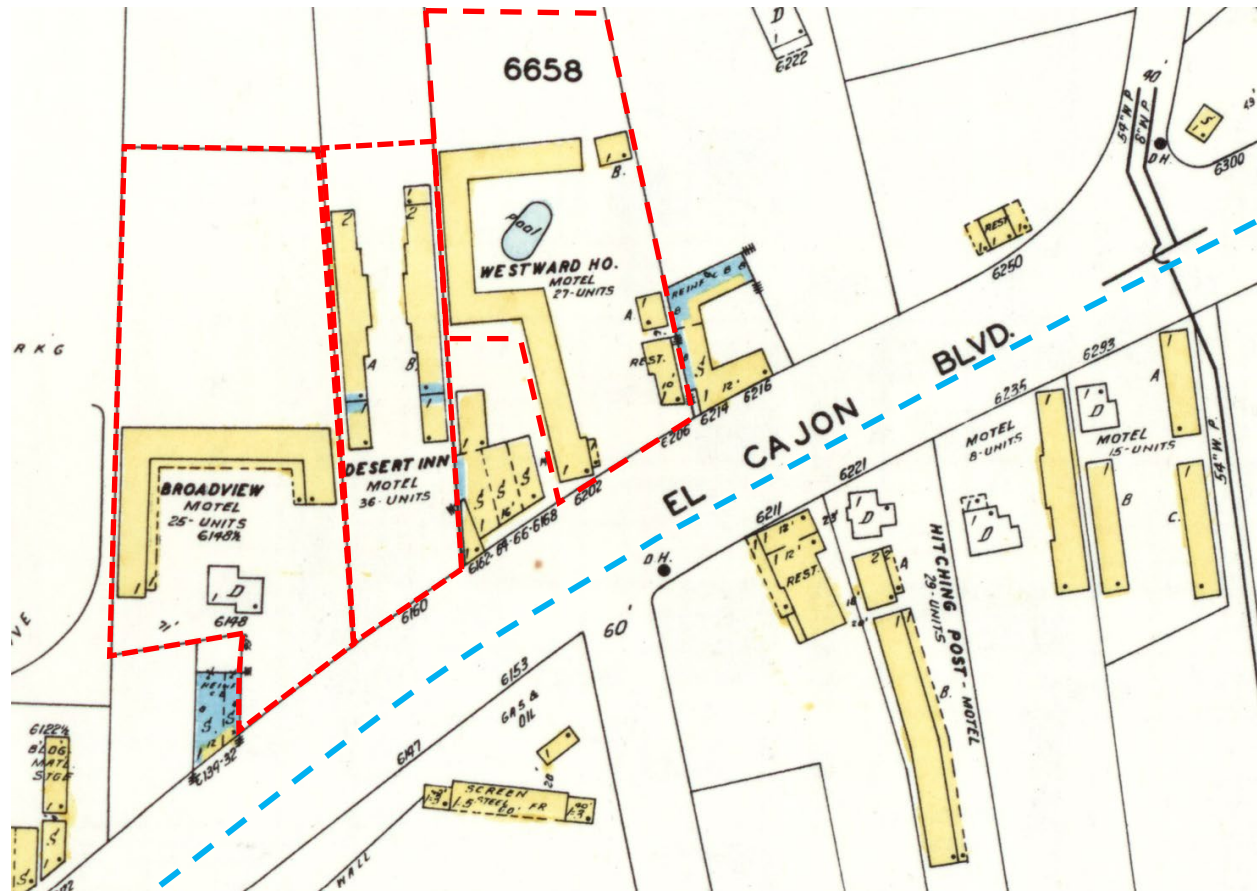


Figure 31. Motels on the north side of El Cajon Boulevard between College Avenue (left or west) and 63rd Street (right or east). All three buildings have been demolished but demonstrate the presence of several motels in the College Area in the early 1950s. Blue dashed line indicates the southern boundary of the modern College Area. Note the three additional motels along the south side of El Cajon. Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1956, volume 5, page 570.

Some motels along El Cajon Boulevard were developed as part of national motel chains that built branded branches all over the United States, aiming for brand recognition and customer loyalty. One such example that is extant in the College Area is the Imperial Motel at 6624 El Cajon Boulevard, which was constructed as the Imperial '400' Motel (Figure 32 and Figure 33). The Imperial 400 Motel company was based in Los Angeles and embarked on a national expansion of their motel chain in the early 1960s after hiring the notable Southern California architecture firm of Palmer & Krisel in 1959 to design a prototype. The Palmer & Krisel design, with its signature butterfly roof, was used on all the signage and publicity material for the motel chain and promoted instant brand recognition.⁹⁷ After the success of the first four motels erected to this prototype design—including one motel location in San Diego, likely located in the City's Civic Center—the design was rolled out into a national building

⁹⁷ John Crosse, "Palmer & Krisel and the Imperial '400' Motels: Spreading Good Design to Mid-Century Travelers," *Southern California Architectural History Blog*, (March 9, 2010), accessed May 28, 2021, <https://socalarchhistory.blogspot.com/2010/03/palmer-krisel-and-imperial-400-motels.html>

campaign. Buildings that were erected as Imperial '400' Motels are found throughout the United States today and often are still in use as motels.



Figure 32. Imperial '400' Motel on El Cajon Boulevard in 1962. Source: Flickr, user: Roadsidepictures.



Figure 33. Imperial Motel still present on El Cajon Boulevard in 2021.

With the subsequent creation of the Interstate 8 freeway, traffic was slowly rerouted away El Cajon Boulevard as a regional thoroughfare. Its designation as Highway 80 ended in 1974, and with it, much of the area's demand for services supporting those "traveling through" the College Area. Some postwar motels and hotels have remained in the College Area today and have retained their hotel use (like the Imperial Motel). However, the majority of these 1950s and 1960s motel parcels have been subsequently redeveloped with commercial retail buildings since the 1970s.

Character-Defining Features of Auto Courts and Motels

- Incorporates Modern architectural styles.
- Buildings set-back from the public right of way with ample parking.
 - Spaces adjacent to and arranged around the buildings.
- One- to two-stories in height.
- Rooms typically accessed from the exterior door.
- Linear arrangement of one or more buildings, typically I, U, or L-shaped plans.
- Large, free-standing signage near the road or attached to the building.
- Guest amenities such as restaurants, lounges, or small retail shops, may be present in separate buildings or adjacent to the main lobby.
- Garden features and/or pools may be present.

Drive-Thru or Chain Commercial Buildings

The typology of the drive-thru commercial building was also a hallmark of 1950s and 1960s car culture with fast-food ordered and delivered directly to your vehicle. College Area has the distinction of being the location of the first Jack-in-the-Box in 1951, which was erected at El

Cajon Boulevard and 63rd Street (demolished). This Jack-in-the-Box was the first drive-thru to feature a two-way intercom that became a hallmark of the fast-food industry.⁹⁸

Chain fast-food restaurants with walk-up and drive-thru ordering were indicative of the time and frequented by both locals and by those driving through the College Area. One of the early models of the Taco Bell restaurant was built in 1966 at 6924 El Cajon Boulevard (extant, different restaurant business) and demonstrates the recognizable architectural branding of these chain commercial buildings.⁹⁹ Another example of the drive-thru/chain restaurant typology in College Area is the building at 5089 College Avenue (now a Mexican fast-food restaurant) at Montezuma Road that was constructed as a Wienerschnitzel and remains recognizable as an extant example of the A-frame massing with integrated drive-thru that marks the Wienerschnitzel brand of franchise architecture.¹⁰⁰



Figure 34. Two examples of extant Drive-Thru/Chain Restaurant architecture within the College Area. Left: 5089 College Avenue, Right: 6924 El Cajon Boulevard.

Character-Defining Features of Drive-Thru or Chain Commercial Buildings

- Standalone building with adjacent parking or auto lanes.
- Designed by a brand or company to serve a retail function and serve as brand advertising.
- Constructed to the same design across a brand or company's region of operation.
- Typically does not relate to local architectural themes or site conditions.

⁹⁸ Philip Langdon, *Orange Roofs, Golden Arches: The Architecture of American Chain Restaurants* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 104; Marie Tutko, "How Jack in the Box became a Fast Food Pioneer," *Hatch Magazine*, (May 31, 2017) accessed April 15, 2021, <http://www.hatch-mag.com/2017/05/31/jack-box-became-fast-food-pioneer/#:~:text=1951,have%20a%20two%2Dway%20intercom>.

⁹⁹ "Grand Opening Taco Bell," *San Diego Union*, July 1, 1966.

¹⁰⁰ The drive-thru design of the Wienerschnitzel A-frame started in 1962. Refer to the *Commercial Development Context, 1859-1980* within the *SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement*, (pages 107-108 on the design development of Wienerschnitzel).

Eligibility Standards

A commercial property in College Area may be eligible for listing in the national, state, or local historic register under one of the following criteria:

- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element): Auto-oriented commercial development along El Cajon Boulevard dating from 1926 to 1974.
 - The property should be a rare or good example of the specific sub-type.
 - This includes examples of prototypical designs by Drive-Thru/Chain or Auto Court and Motel establishments used to establish its branding, particularly if the designs are increasingly rare or rare for San Diego.
 - The property should retain integrity of location with its original relationship to El Cajon Boulevard or the commercial street.
 - Storefront alterations are common, though the property should be recognizable to the period of significance.
 - The property should retain some integrity of feeling and association along with sufficient design, materials, and/or workmanship integrity.
 - Those that have a different use than that of the original sub-type may be eligible so long as the essential form of the type remains to convey its association.
- NRHP B / CRHR 2 / SDRHR B (Persons): Association with a significant person in national, state, or local history.
 - The property should retain some features of all seven aspects of integrity.
 - Integrity of design and workmanship may not be as important if a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today.
 - More flexibility of integrity is available to properties eligible for the local register.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR C (Architecture): Rare, good, or unusual example of a style, type, period or method of construction, or for SDRHR C, is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR D (Work of Master): Representative of the notable work or a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman.
 - Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are most relevant for eligibility under the Architecture and Work of a Master criteria.

Study List

The following properties were identified during the research and preparation of this theme. A conclusion has not been reached regarding the significance of these properties, which

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should be evaluated in the future on a site-specific basis to determine their significance or lack thereof. Properties are arranged by street number with Early Commercial Buildings listed first, followed by Postwar Commercial, Drive-Thru/Chain Commercial, and Auto Courts and Motel buildings.

Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
5722-5728	El Cajon Boulevard	4667311400	Early Commercial Building		
5900	El Cajon Boulevard	4667420500	Early Commercial Building	Streamline Moderne	Currently the Livingroom Coffeehouse
6134	El Cajon Boulevard	4674201000	Early Commercial Building		
6166-6168	El Cajon Boulevard	4674201300	Early Commercial Building		
5952	El Cajon Boulevard	4666023200	Postwar Commercial	Mid-century Modern	Office building designed by Palmer & Krisel
6010	El Cajon Boulevard	4666101100	Postwar Commercial	Mid-century Modern	Bank building; currently a CitiBank branch
6475 and 6505	Alvarado Road	4635902400 4635902500	Postwar Commercial	Modern	Alvarado Medical Center
6244	El Cajon Boulevard	4674202700	Postwar Commercial	Modern	Campus Medical-Dental Professional Center
6302	El Cajon Boulevard	4674510100	Postwar Commercial	Mid-century Modern	Concrete block and stone walls
6322	El Cajon Boulevard	4674510300	Postwar Commercial	Mid-century Modern	Featheringill Mortuary; features a folded plate roof
5089	College Avenue	4671501100	Drive-Thru/Chain Commercial	Mid-century Modern	Wienerschnitzel A-frame drive-thru
6924	El Cajon Boulevard	4681622200	Drive-Thru/Chain Commercial		Taco Bell "hacienda" design

6624	El Cajon Boulevard	4681700500	Auto Courts and Motels	Mid-century Modern	Imperial Motel
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Theme: Development Created by the College (1931–1974)

The relocation of the San Diego State Teachers College to this eastern area of San Diego in the late 1920s and early 1930s is what give the area its name – the College Area. While the City's planning and historic preservation regulations do not apply to State educational properties such as the College itself (now San Diego State University), the presence of this higher education institution was a driving force for development in the surrounding area.

The San Diego State Teachers College Relocates to College Area

In the 1920s, the San Diego State Teachers College began to discuss relocating, as they had outgrown their University Heights campus. The Teachers College was founded in 1897 as the San Diego Normal School to train female elementary school teachers.¹⁰¹ It soon moved to its newly constructed campus on Park Boulevard in the then slowly developing University Heights neighborhood.¹⁰² It became the San Diego State Teachers College in 1921, and a four-year public institution overseen by the state Board of Education by 1923. As enrollment grew, the College planned for a larger campus.

While ten sites were put forward as possible locations in the mid-1920s, the first bond issue to support the relocation was defeated.¹⁰³ In 1927, the relocation was revisited and several new sites, including a 125-acre parcel in the future location of the College Area, were reviewed. The College Area location was owned by the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company, which had purchased thousands of acres across the modern College Area and Alvarado Canyon. This vast acreage was envisioned to develop as a high-end residential enclave called Mission Palisades (Figure 35). The plan for Mission Palisades was to be based on the example of Bel-Air, which was a Bell-Lloyd project located near the new University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) campus being built in the just developing Westwood area of Los Angeles.¹⁰⁴ To make the College Area location more appealing to City and college officials, the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company included infrastructure improvements to the area, such as offering an

¹⁰¹ Lynne E. Christenson, Alexander D. Bevil, and Sue Wade, "San Diego State College Historic District: The Mediterranean Monastery as a College Campus," The San Diego State University Occasional Archaeological Papers, accessed March 29, 2021, <https://soap.sdsu.edu/Volume1/SDSCollege/college.htm>.

¹⁰² "SDSU History and Mission," San Diego State University, accessed March 29, 2021, <https://stratcomm.sdsu.edu/sdsu-mission-and-history>.

¹⁰³ Alexander Bevil, "From Grecian Columns to Spanish Towers: The Development of San Diego State College, 1922-1953." *Journal of San Diego History*, v. 41, n. 1 (1995).

¹⁰⁴ National Register of Historic Places. San Diego State University, San Diego, San Diego County, California. Reference number 97000924.

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additional \$50,000 for the landscaping of the College campus, and providing the services of a landscape architect and urban planner to guide the campus development.¹⁰⁵ The offer was accepted and Bell-Lloyd donated the land in 1928.

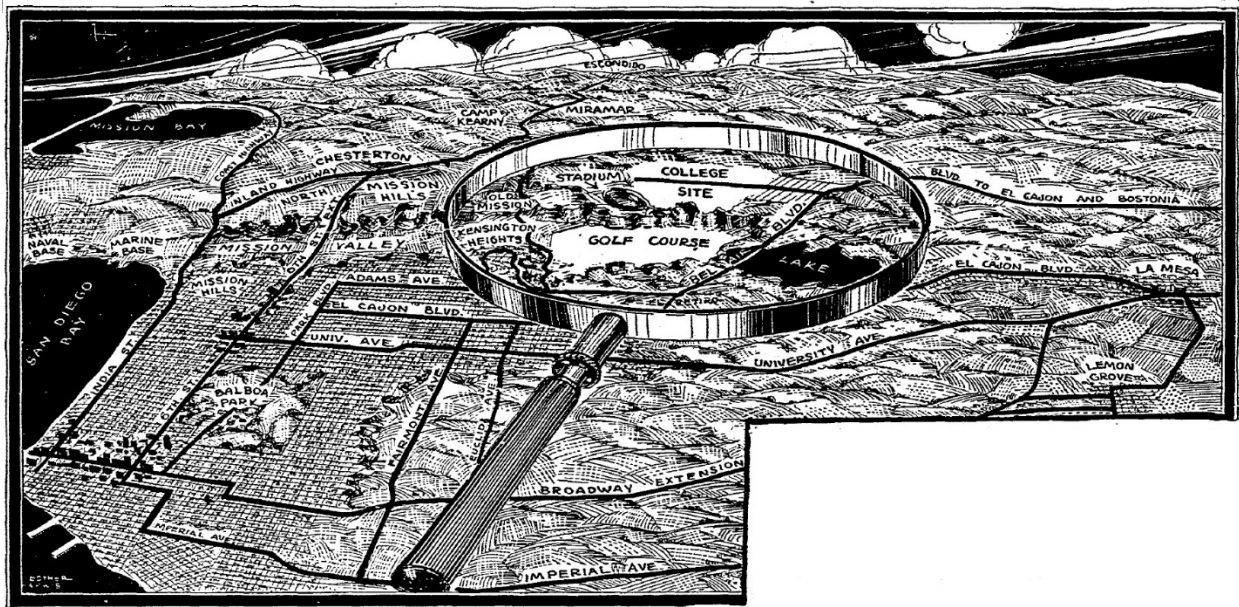


Figure 35. Map of the proposed Mission Palisades Development Project by Bell-Lloyd Investment Company. Published in the San Diego Union on March 17, 1928. Man-made lake, golf course, and planned scale of the development was never undertaken or completed.

The College's campus was started in 1929 with a groundbreaking ceremony, and the original six campus buildings were completed in 1931. These first buildings, including the Academic Building, the Library and Campanile, the Little Theater, the Teacher Training School, the Science Building, and the Power Plant, were designed in a cohesive Spanish Colonial Revival style by Howard Spencer Hazen, the senior architect of the California Division of the State Architect.¹⁰⁶ The relocation of the college to this relatively remote mesa overlooking Alvarado Canyon occurred later that year (Figure 36).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ National Register of Historic Places. San Diego State University, San Diego, San Diego County, California. Reference number 97000924.



Figure 36: Aerial photograph of San Diego State University (then Teachers College) in 1930 while the original buildings and campus were still being completed. North is to the upper left corner. Source: San Diego City Clerk's Archives.

The continued development of the College from 1931 through the end of World War II was made possible through the fact that a significant amount of funding had already been allotted for the College's development, and additional funding and manpower was made available through the use of Works Progress Administration (WPA) funding and workforce.¹⁰⁷ Additional facilities that were opened in the 1930s include: Scripps Cottage (1931), the Student's Club (1932), the Dual Gymnasium (1934), and the Aztec Bowl (1936, since partially demolished).¹⁰⁸ The Greek Bowl was completed in 1941 and the Music Building in 1942. In 1935, the college was renamed San Diego State College once the state

¹⁰⁷ National Register of Historic Places. San Diego State University, San Diego, San Diego County, California. Reference number 97000924.

¹⁰⁸ *San Diego Modernism*, 29; refer also to National Register of Historic Places. San Diego State University, San Diego, San Diego County, California. Reference number 97000924; also, Iris Engstrand, Pat Finn, and Seth Mallios, "WPA Left Its Mark on San Diego" KBPS Public Broadcasting, April 10, 2007, Accessed April 15, 2021, <https://www.kpbs.org/news/2007/apr/10/wpa-left-its-mark-on-san-diego/>.

legislature authorized expansion of degree programs beyond teacher education.¹⁰⁹ At the time, the College had 1,250 students enrolled and 63 faculty members.¹¹⁰

Throughout these years, the College grew its footprint to the south, east and west but remained relatively removed (and a ravine away) from the residential and commercial developments closer to El Cajon Boulevard with the exception of the Bell-Lloyd College Park residential area (refer to Figure 37). The College and the surrounding neighborhoods would not develop a more integral relationship until the expansion of tract housing following World War II and the growth of the College's student population, which led to long-term tensions around off-campus student housing and the overall growth and expansion of College facilities.

Residential Development Spurred by the Relocation of the College

When the College had previously moved to its University Heights campus, it had proved to be a catalyst for the surrounding area. It was expected that a similar development pattern would emerge at its new location and that the area would develop rapidly even without the ministrations of the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company. In mid-1929, prior to the onset of the Great Depression in October, significant development and property sales in the El Retiro subdivision (subdivided in 1927), located just north of the intersection of El Cajon and College Avenue (then called Gilcher Street) showed that this potential boom was likely.¹¹¹

When first planned, Bell-Lloyd envisioned their Mission Palisades development with two golf courses, a resort hotel, a man-made lake, bridle paths, parks, and a private airport, in addition to the college campus and a large residential area.¹¹² Bell-Lloyd had been extremely confident in the development prospects of the area and purchased an additional 160 acres that lay between the college campus and El Cajon Boulevard in 1930.¹¹³ However, the plans for the larger Mission Palisades project ground to a halt in the depths of the Great Depression and only minimal residential development was undertaken from 1931 to 1936, within the College Park subdivision, which was the only subdivision map filed in the 1930s

¹⁰⁹ "SDSU History and Mission."

¹¹⁰ Sue A. Wade, Alexander D. Bevil, Dr. Lynne E. Christenson, and students of Historic Preservation class, Fall 1995, "San Diego State College," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (San Diego: San Diego State University, 1997), Section 8, Page 7.

¹¹¹ Street Work Shows Activity at State College Grounds." *San Diego Evening Tribune*, July 20, 1929.

¹¹² Alexander Bevil, "From Grecian Columns to Spanish Towers: The Development of San Diego State College, 1922-1953." *Journal of San Diego History*, v. 41, n. 1 (1995), 38-57; John O. Pohlmann, "Alphonzo E. Bell: A Biography, Part II," *Southern California Quarterly*, v. 46, n. 4 (December 1964), 315-350. Available through JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41171357>.

¹¹³ "Buys 160 Acres in College Area, Paying \$250,000," *The San Diego Union*, December 16, 1930, 2.

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within all of modern College Area (Figure 37). Only five residences had been built within College Park by 1933, three on the west side of College Avenue and two on the east side.¹¹⁴ The company also constructed a two-story brick and stucco “store and apartment building,” at the corner of College Avenue and Hardy Avenue, which later became privately-owned house available to students known as Montezuma Hall (demolished).¹¹⁵ Bell-Lloyd did establish, grade, and pave College Avenue by 1933, which provided primary access between the College campus and El Cajon Bl. and absorbed the earlier established Gilcher Street of the El Retiro residential subdivision.¹¹⁶



Figure 37: Aerial photograph from 1936 with the San Diego State College campus (left) and the extent of the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company's College Park development visible at College Avenue and the semi-circular Cresita Drive, between

¹¹⁴ Bevil, “From Grecian Columns to Spanish Towers.”

¹¹⁵ “Progress Shown in Development Plans in State College District,” *San Diego Union*, August 9, 1931; “Quetzal Hall, 1942,” *San Diego State University Library Digital Collections*, accessed July 17, 2023, <https://digital.sdsu.edu/view-item?i=88613&WINID=1689637406615>.

¹¹⁶ “Plan to Develop Big Tract Near State College,” *San Diego Union*, January 31, 1931; “Street Work Shows Activity at State College Grounds.” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, July 20, 1929.

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the campus and El Cajon Avenue (dashed yellow line). The approximate western border of the College Area CPA is the blue dotted line. Source: San Diego City Clerk Archive. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

In 1935 and 1936, an effort was made to increase sales and building activity through public statements around the lessening of the Great Depression. In 1935, *The San Diego Union* reported that an association of the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company and the George M. Hawley Investment Company, represented by College Realty Company, had sold 10 houses in College Area in the last 10 days, illustrating the desirability of the area and the improvements in the real estate market.¹¹⁷ The article further stressed the benefits of purchasing a residence still under construction in order to allow for personalization of the building's plan and details by the homeowner. The illustrated houses with the article all were on College Avenue or Cresita Drive, the semi-circular street to the west of College Avenue that was part of Bell-Lloyd's College Park subdivision (Figure 38).

¹¹⁷ "10 New Houses in College Area Sold in 10 Days," *The San Diego Union*, October 6, 1935. George M. Hawley was a prolific San Diego developer who was previously active in the development of Normal Heights, the neighborhood located around the former home of the San Diego State Teachers College. He passed away in 1935. It is not clear how long his investment company continued after his death. Refer to Suzanne Ledeboer, "San Diego's Normal Heights: The Growth of a Suburban Neighborhood," *Journal of San Diego History*, v. 52 (Winter/Spring 2006): 21-22.

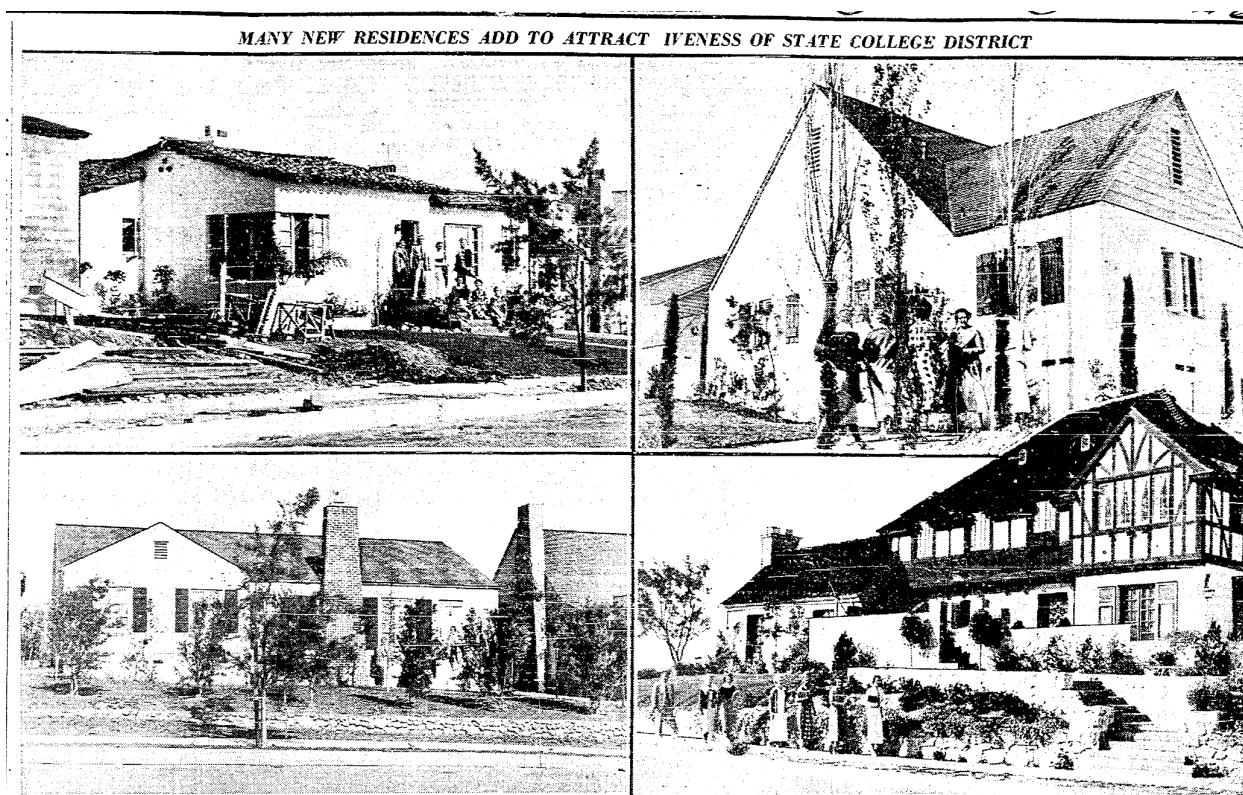


Figure 38. Images accompanying the October 6, 1935 San Diego Union article about new residences added around the College, which include a block of new homes on College Avenue being built by the College Realty Company (upper left); 4921 College Avenue (upper right); 4927 College Avenue (lower left); and 4919 Cresita Drive (lower right). No architects were named in association with these houses.

The Bell-Lloyd Investment Company officially abandoned its vision for the Mission Palisades project in 1936, with ownership of the site eventually transferred to Steve Griffith, the project's street grading contractor.¹¹⁸ Two firms associated with the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company continued to develop in the immediate area. Lloyd B. Farmer, previously a representative for Bell-Lloyd, built 18 new homes in 1936, primarily along College Avenue, using the "Moorish architecture of the new State college," as a guide.¹¹⁹ College Realty Company, which had been the representative for the George M. Hawley Investment Company and worked with Bell-Lloyd in selling their College Park homes, erected a number of freestanding single-family residences in 1936 along the southern section of College Avenue and along Soria Drive, one block to the west, between Arosa Street and Adams Avenue. These homes, in what had been subdivided as the El Retiro tract in 1927, were more

¹¹⁸ Bevil, "From Grecian Columns to Spanish Towers."

¹¹⁹ "Sensational Development Seen," *San Diego Union*, August 2, 1936.

modest, though still included Spanish Colonial Revival styles and can be seen as the final legacy of the Bell-Lloyd residential efforts directly linked to the College's relocation.¹²⁰

Postwar Expansion of San Diego State College

San Diego State College, like nearly all higher education institutions during the postwar period, saw significant increases in enrollment in the late 1940s as returning veterans took advantage of tuition stipends provided by the "G.I. Bill" (officially called the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944).¹²¹ In 1943, the college's enrollment was just 860 students, but in 1947 the school had 4,376 students.¹²² Other changes specific to SDSU in the late 1940s included the passage of a state resolution signed by the Governor of California, that allowed SDSU to become a four-year liberal arts college in 1947, and the addition of graduate educational courses to the school.¹²³

Overcrowding was partially managed through the erection of temporary structures, both as classrooms and housing. The need to expand the College's physical space was timely, as land around the existing campus was still available, and the College was able to purchase many of the parcels directly adjacent to its campus. In 1948, the College purchased 25 acres, where men's dorms and a gymnasium were constructed.¹²⁴ The school embarked on a significant building campaign that more than tripled its interior academic square footage by 1957.¹²⁵ It was during this period of the 1950s that the campus grew in size to the west, south, and southeast, and was no longer physically isolated from the surrounding community of College Area (Figure 39).

¹²⁰ "Building Boom Hits College Area; Many Attractive Homes Constructed in Suburban District," *San Diego Union*, January 26, 1936. According to historian Alexander D. Bevil, Farmer was indicted by the federal grand jury in Los Angeles in 1939 on charges of defrauding the government in Federal Housing Administration transactions. The indictment stemmed from Farmer, along with San Diego building contractors E.W. and M.S. Dennstedt, and realtor R.E. Veall, allegedly filing false and misleading reports to the FHA. Bevil, "From Grecian Columns to Spanish Towers," footnote 56. Veall was identified as the manager of College Realty Company in "10 New Houses in College Area Sold in 10 Days," *The San Diego Union*, October 6, 1935.

¹²¹ Pat Stalnaker, "A New Campus – A New Era," 9, in *The San Diego State Story* (1962) electronic document, accessed April 16, 2021, via the SDSU Library Digital Collections. <http://digital.sdsu.edu/view-item?i=167997>. The article refers to the GI Bill as Public Law 346.

¹²² "SDSU: 1946 to 1971," *The Daily Aztec* (online), February 28, 1997, accessed June 4, 2021, <http://thedailyaztec.com/17845/daily-aztec-stories/sdsu-1946-to-1971/>.

¹²³ "SDSU: 1946 to 1971," *The Daily Aztec* (online), February 28, 1997.

¹²⁴ Stalnaker, "A New Campus," 9.

¹²⁵ "SDSU: 1946 to 1971," *The Daily Aztec* (online), February 28, 1997. Reported numbers state that square footage increased from about 255,000 square feet to 1,240,000 square feet.

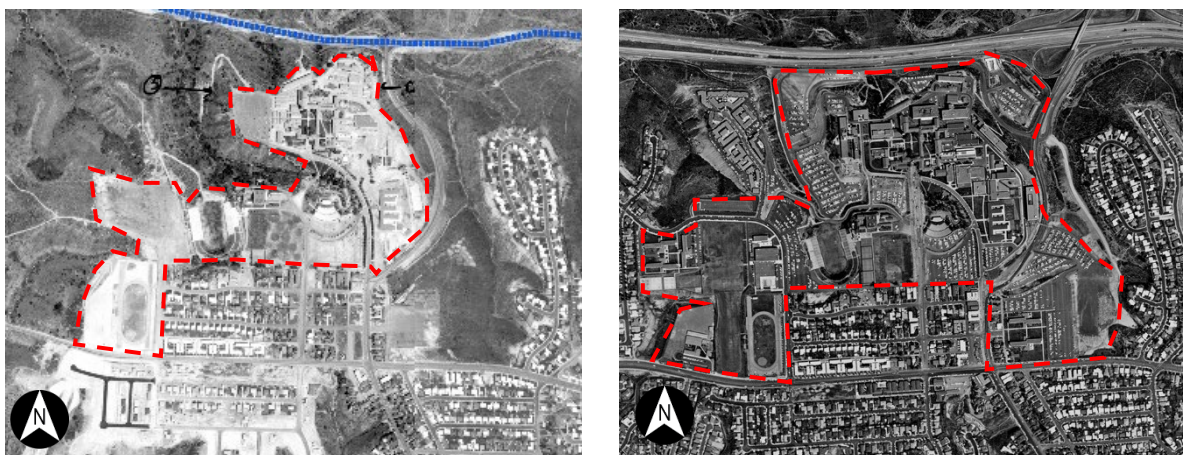


Figure 39. Approximate boundaries of the San Diego State College campus in 1953 (left) and 1963 (right) over a decade of growth. Source: Source: Flight AXN-1953, Frames 10m-110 and 14m-99, January 1953 (left) and Flight CAS-SD, Frame 5-30, January 1963 (right). Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

While the school's classroom and educational facilities grew quickly, living facilities for students did not follow the same building campaign and student housing was a major issue of the period. San Diego State College historically operated as a commuter school and was not in the practice of offering housing for its student body. When the College first opened it had one privately-owned and operated boarding house called Montezuma Hall (located at 5186 College Avenue, demolished 1995). The building, which was designed in an Art Deco style could house up to 30 men with bunk-style accommodations and a single bathroom.¹²⁶ This boarding house transitioned to a women's boarding house during World War II, and was renamed Quetzal House.¹²⁷

In the postwar period, temporary housing was provided to students on campus through the erection of trailers and army surplus structures, but housing facilities were nowhere near adequate in meeting demand.¹²⁸ The student housing shortage impacted the surrounding neighborhood, where housing was already limited. As more tract housing was completed in the College Area in the early 1950s, many college students with families—and an interest in

¹²⁶ "SDSU: 1946 to 1971," *The Daily Aztec* (online), February 28, 1997.

¹²⁷ "Quetzal Hall, 1942," *San Diego State University Library Digital Collections*, accessed July 17, 2023, <https://digital.sdsu.edu/view-item?i=88613&WINID=1689637406615>; "SDSU: 1946 to 1971," *The Daily Aztec* (online), February 28, 1997. Notably, this building was constructed by and also served as the headquarters of Bell-Lloyd Investment Company and Mission Palisades Company.

¹²⁸ Mona, Basich, "'Rooms Wanted' – The Continuous Cry," 17, in *The San Diego State Story* (1962) electronic document, accessed April 16, 2021, via the SDSU Library Digital Collections. <http://digital.sdsu.edu/view-item?i=167997>.

becoming homeowners—were able to find suitable housing nearby (see **Theme: Postwar Residential Development, 1945-1974**). However, students looking for an apartment or shared living accommodations for a single person had few to no available options. The College did not offer dorms until the late 1950s.¹²⁹

In 1957, the College began an outreach program that asked College Area residents to offer their extra bedrooms, attics, and garages as rentable living space to students, and even undertook a door-knocking campaign to solicit community help.¹³⁰ The extent to which this request worked is unknown, and by 1959, the college had opened their first dorm, with three more dorms completed in 1960.¹³¹ The men's dorms were located toward the westward expansion of campus, near the athletic facilities, while the women's dorms were located at the northeast corner of College Avenue and Montezuma Road, as the College expanded to the southeast.¹³² Other dorms constructed included was El Conquistador (now University Tower) in 1966 at the corner of Montezuma Road and 55th Street to the south of campus, which is one of the few high-rise buildings in College Area; the building remains under university ownership.¹³³

Some pockets of more dense multi-family housing were created to support the increasing housing demands of students and located directly adjacent to the campus. An example of this is the College View apartment complex (1954), which is centered around the northern end of 55th Street northwest of the college campus and includes several two- and three-story buildings around a central courtyard in the 1950s.¹³⁴ Other individual apartment buildings may have been constructed at the periphery of the 1920s subdivisions along El Cajon Boulevard to attract student renters. Built in the early postwar period, these were typically modest in scale, consisting of two or three stories, with four or more units all within one building, located on one or two typical residential lots, and typically Minimal Traditional, Mid-century Modern, or Modern in design.

A few sororities and fraternities were built off-campus in the early 1960s to provide alternative options for higher density student housing. These endeavors were generally undertaken near the southern edge of the College campus near the intersections of Montezuma Road, College Avenue, and College Place. Based on a review of historic aerials

¹²⁹ Stalnaker, "A New Campus," 9.

¹³⁰ Basich, "Rooms Wanted," 17.

¹³¹ "SDSU: 1946 to 1971," *The Daily Aztec* (online), February 28, 1997.

¹³² Stalnaker, "A New Campus," 9; Basich, "Rooms Wanted," 17.

¹³³ "Updates at University Towers Near Completion," SDSU Alumni, accessed June 18, 2021, <http://www.sdsualumni.org/s/997/rd16/interior.aspx?sid=997&gid=1&pgid=3029>.

¹³⁴ HistoricAerials.com, buildings are present on a 1964 aerial and appear to have been completed in the 1950s soon after the area's subdivision map was filed. Many are now owned by the College.

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from 1953 through 1968, these were accomplished through demolition or redevelopment of parcels with existing single-family residences.¹³⁵ Some of these early fraternities and sororities were designed by prominent local architects including Robert E. des Lauriers (Theta Chi Fraternity, 5712 Hardy Avenue, built 1960, demolished or highly altered; and Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, 5720 Montezuma Road, built 1965, extant) and Sim Bruce Richards (Alpha Phi Sorority, 6055 Montezuma Road, built 1966, extant).¹³⁶ These Greek-Life buildings illustrate common design elements of the Modern style popular at the time.

In 1960, the College became part of the newly created California State College system, which later became the California State University (CSU) system.¹³⁷ Despite the new dorms, demand for student housing continued.¹³⁸ The first attempt at planning for the College Area was initiated in 1964 by the City of San Diego City Planning Department to better understand the options for increased residential density in the area immediately adjacent to the campus.¹³⁹ The 1965 San Diego State College Area Plan ("1965 Area Plan") noted that other than a large multi-family residential development at the north end of 55th Street (the College View apartment complex), and mixed multi-family residential, institutional, and commercial uses around Montezuma Road and College Avenue, and El Cajon Boulevard and College Avenue, most of the area surrounding the campus was single-family residential use (Figure 40). Only two acres of R-4 zoned multi-family property remained vacant.

¹³⁵ HistoricAerials.com, Various years including 1953, 1964, 1966, and 1968.

¹³⁶ "Sim Bruce Richards," *Modern San Diego*, accessed June 4, 2021, <https://www.modernsandiego.com/people/sim-bruce-richards>.

¹³⁷ "SDSU History and Mission."

¹³⁸ Basich, "Rooms Wanted," 17.

¹³⁹ City of San Diego City Planning Department, *San Diego State College Area Plan* (March 1964), 1, 4-5.

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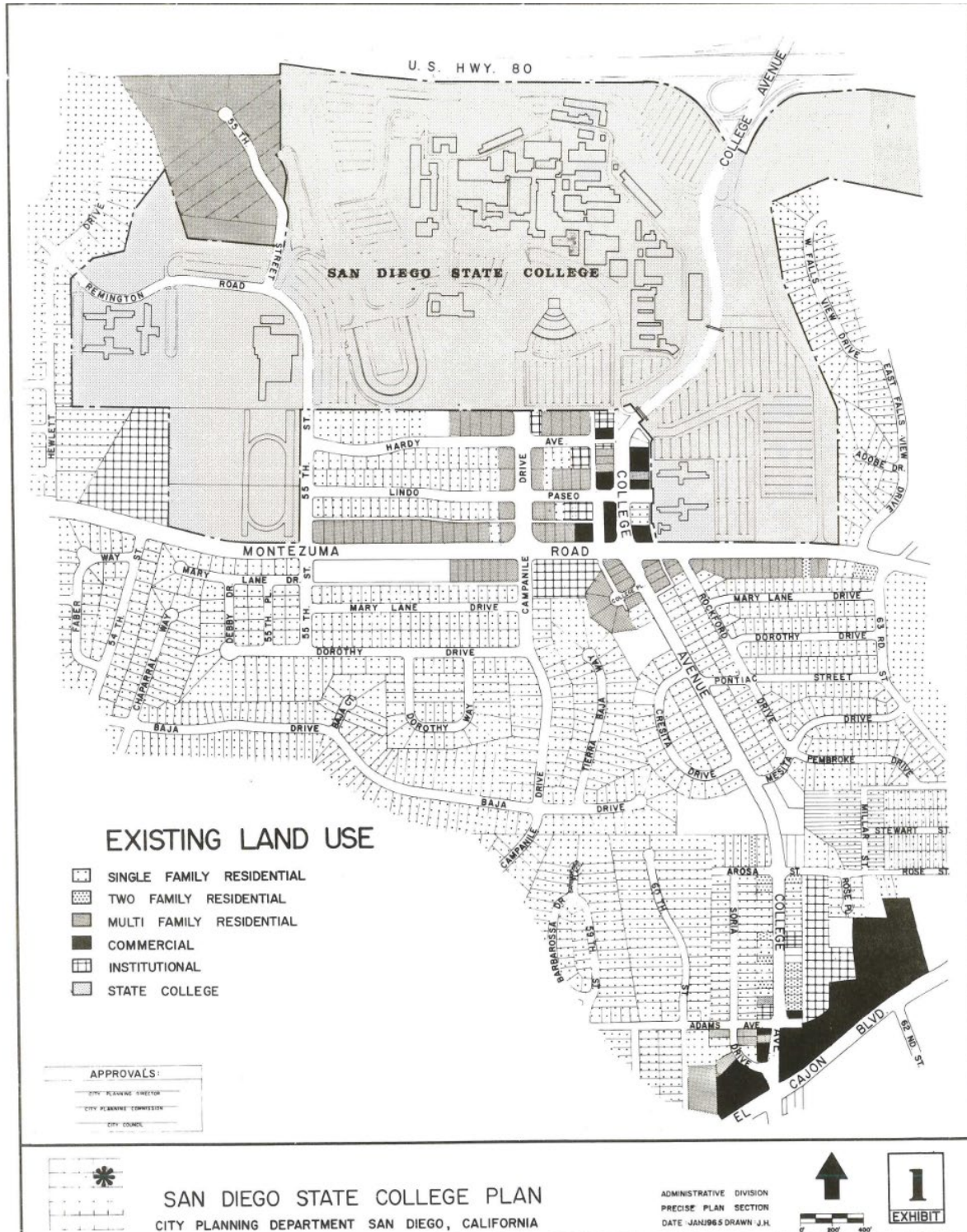


Figure 40. The extent of San Diego State College campus in 1965, along with the surrounding land uses, which show only the small areas zoned for multi-family housing around Montezuma Road and in the northwest corner. Source: City of San Diego City Planning Department, San Diego State College Area Plan (March 1965).

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In a letter included in the 1964 Area Plan, the College stated that it had an extensive waiting list for housing, and while it hoped to add on-campus housing, no funds were presently available. With an enrollment of 16,000 and an expectation of growth to 20,000 students, the College estimated that 40 percent, or 8,000 students, would like to live nearby. The College estimated that it could ultimately house 5,000 student in dorms, which still necessitated at least 3,000 students seeing housing in sororities, fraternities, and other off-campus housing.¹⁴⁰

The 1964 Area Plan recommended that high-density multi-family should be located near the campus whenever possible. It considered re-zoning some of College Avenue for higher density residential, but ultimately recommended that Conditional Use Permits be used to allow for additional fraternities, sororities, and student dormitories to be constructed instead. This likely led to the increased concentration of these residential Greek-Life buildings as discussed above.¹⁴¹ This allowed for some additional Greek-Life residential structures to be built, but would never meet the demand for apartment -style residential options for enough students.

The 1974 State University Area Plan (referred to as the “1974 Area Plan”) was initiated to further investigate the ramifications of the College’s immense growth on the surrounding College Area. By 1974, the College had become San Diego State University (SDSU), its campus expanded to 275 acres compared to its original 125 acres, and enrollment had risen to 28,000 students, far exceeding the full-time 20,000 enrollment expected in the 1964 Area Plan.¹⁴² In addition to the housing needs, traffic and parking congestion were major concerns.

With boundaries approximately the same as the modern-day College Area Community Plan area, the 1974 Area Plan was a forward-looking plan, intended to guide future public and private improvements for the next 10 to 15 years. By this time, very little undeveloped land remained in the boundaries, which meant future development would no longer be on vacant land but would be more infill development and re-development.¹⁴³

The 1974 Area Plan prioritized a study of multi-family housing opportunities near the campus and explored how increasing traffic to the College was impacting parking and congestion in the area.¹⁴⁴ As noted in the 1974 Community Plan, “In 1965 only 17% of the students lived in the general vicinity of the campus, as compared to 28% living there only three years earlier.

¹⁴⁰ City of San Diego City Planning Department, *San Diego State College Area Plan* (March 1964), 9-10.

¹⁴¹ City of San Diego City Planning Department, *San Diego State College Area Plan* (March 1965), 1-4.

¹⁴² City of San Diego, *State University Area Plan* (March 1974), 1.

¹⁴³ City of San Diego, *State University Area Plan* (March 1974), 1, 11.

¹⁴⁴ City of San Diego, *State University Area Plan* (March 1974), 1.

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This decrease is understandable as the development of student housing has not been proportional to the growth in enrollment.”¹⁴⁵



Figure 41. 1971 Land Use map of the College Area, reproduced from the 1974 San Diego State University Area Plan. Source: City of San Diego City Planning Department.

Similar to the 1964 Area Plan, the 1974 Area Plan continued to stress that multi-family residential development should be a priority in areas close to the campus, while the larger area of primarily single-family housing should be retained given its age, property values, and quality. As shown in a 1971 Land Use map included in the 1974 Area Plan, reproduced below (Figure 41), the patterns of land use that existed within College Area remained largely stable from the 1960s through the present day. Changes resulting from the 1974 Area Plan were largely limited to goals for somewhat expanded multi-family apartment-style housing to be prioritized both by the College, as it aimed to meet student demand, and through the slight enlargement of multi-family zoning areas immediately adjacent to the campus (Figure 42). This tension between the physical and student population expansion of the College and its

¹⁴⁵ City of San Diego, *State University Area Plan* (March 1974), 11.

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interface with the surrounding residential community continues to shape the discussion of land use and development within the College Area.

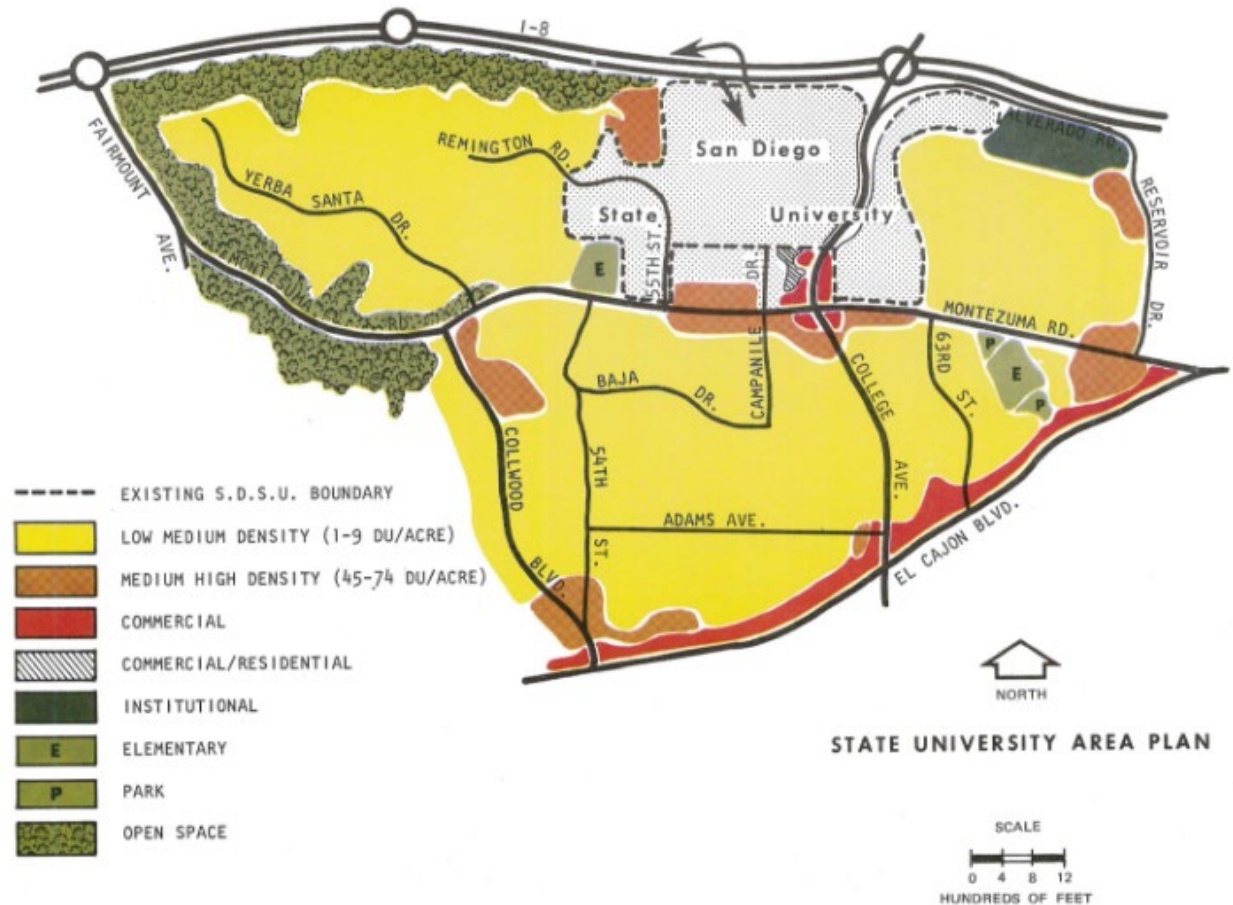


Figure 42. 1974 proposed Area Plan map of the College Area, reproduced from the 1974 San Diego State University Area Plan. Source: City of San Diego City Planning Department.

Property Types

Bell-Lloyd-Associated Single-Family Residences, 1931-ca. 1936

The Bell-Lloyd Company's plan to create Mission Palisades, a high-end residential enclave adjacent to the new San Diego State Teachers College (now SDSU), was grand in scope but ultimately short-lived in execution. Bell-Lloyd filed a subdivision map for the College Park section in 1931—the only subdivision map filed in the College Area in the 1930s—and constructed a handful of residences from 1931 to 1936 along College Avenue. Given the significance of the Bell-Lloyd vision for Mission Palisades and the company's role in the choice of the future College Area as the new home of the San Diego State Teachers College, and the relationship of these residential buildings to the larger vision for the area, surviving buildings would benefit from additional study. The handful of properties directly associated with the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company in the early years of College Park's development, 1931 to 1935, are also likely eligible for their association with the early development of this tract.



Figure 43: Single-family residences directly developed by Bell-Lloyd in College Park

Character-Defining Features of Bell-Lloyd-built Single-Family Residences

- One- to two-story single-family residences built in the popular Period Revival architectural styles, such as Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival, as well as the Minimal Traditional style
- Evenly setback from the street with a front garden or landscaping

Apartment Buildings and Complexes

Multi-family housing within the College Area is limited, given the small areas zoned for multiple units. Much of it is immediately surrounding San Diego State College (later University) and likely constructed to cater to students as off-campus rental housing. Multi-family developments in other areas zoned for R-2, R-3, and R-4, such as adjacent to El Cajon

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Boulevard and at the periphery of some single-family neighborhoods, may also have been developed with the student population in mind. Such properties are typically small- and medium-scale apartment buildings and apartment complexes. In general, these multi-family housing types were constructed as two- to three-story buildings in Modern styles that were popular in the postwar period.

The apartment complexes typically have a central courtyard with shared resident amenities, such as a swimming pool. Residential units in two- to three-story buildings surround the courtyard, which is generally minimally visible from the street. The property tends to be on a large lot or more than one lot with one or more buildings arranged in various configurations (L, E, U, O, etc.) to provide units with light and air and direct views to the central courtyard. The courtyard may have plantings, hardscape, or landscape features, which are among the character-defining features of this subtype of postwar apartment buildings.



Figure 44. Examples of postwar apartment houses in College Area.



Figure 45. Examples of postwar courtyard apartments in College Area.

Character-Defining Features of Apartment Buildings

- Single building containing four or more residential units.
- Typically two or three stories tall.
- Built in popular architectural styles of the mid- to late-20th century, such as Mid-Century Modern, Ranch, etc.
- Dedicated on-site parking such as surface parking spaces adjacent to or beneath the building or located in adjacent carports.

Character-Defining Features of Apartment Complexes:

- One or more two-story, multi-unit buildings arranged around a central common open space or courtyard, with or without swimming pool.
- Two- or three-story building heights.
- L, E, U, or O configuration of buildings.
- Units generally open to courtyard.
- Courtyard accessed from street and landscaped with a mix of paved surfaces and planted areas.
- Small-scale features, such as planters; fountains; lamp posts; and entry gates, piers, or posts that mark the entry to the courtyard.
- Dedicated on-site parking areas or garages, typically at the rear of the property.
- Simplified or vernacular expression of popular architectural styles during the period of construction, such as Minimal Traditional, Mid-Century Modern, etc.

Greek Life Buildings (Fraternities and Sororities)

Greek-life buildings constructed in College Area in the 1960s are loosely grouped around the intersection of Montezuma Road and College Avenue, and along College Place. Many of these buildings demonstrate high-style design features and were architect designed.



Figure 46: Examples of Greek-Life properties in the College Area

Character-Defining Features of Greek Life Buildings

- One- to two-story buildings primarily of wood frame construction.
- Modern or Mid-century Modern design, typically architect-designed.
- Properties may have minimal setbacks from the street to maximize usable area or may retain an existing established setback.
- Typically located on one or two standard width lots.

Eligibility Standards

Properties that developed as a direct result of San Diego State College (later University) maybe may be eligible for listing in the national, state, or local historic register under one of the following criteria:

- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element): Association with the Bell-Lloyd development of College Park from 1931 to 1936 as the only subdivision undertaken directly tied to the relocation of the College, or with known local associates of Bell-Lloyd Investment Company that continued construction adjacent to College Park and marketed the properties for their proximity to the College or as in the College Area.
 - The property should retain integrity of location, sufficient integrity of design, materials, and/or workmanship to be associated with its period of construction, and integrity of feeling and association as an early single-family residence in the College Park subdivision constructed from 1931 to ca.1936, or in adjacent tracts developed by known local associates of Bell-Lloyd directly after 1936.
 - An unaltered and highly intact example may be considered eligible due to its rare association with this history, if most or all other buildings have been altered.
- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR F (Historic Districts): Well-defined group of single-family residences developed by the Bell-Lloyd Investment Company or known local associates, and which represent one or more architectural periods or styles.
 - Individual contributors should have a good level of integrity overall.
 - District boundaries may relate to the original subdivision, or a smaller grouping of houses completed within the initial period of construction.
 - Residences will have a mix of architectural styles, including Period Revival styles and Minimal Traditional designs that feature a similar scale, massing, setback, and other elements common to the neighborhood.
- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element): An excellent example of a multi-family residential in the College Area originally constructed for, or catering primarily to, student tenants and reflecting the growth of the College.

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- The property should retain integrity of location, design, materials, and/or workmanship associated with its period of construction, and integrity of feeling and association as a multi-family residential development for student tenants.
 - Integrity of setting may be compromised as alterations have occurred over time. Key features from its original setting, such as a courtyard, landscaped areas, circulation system, etc. should remain with sufficient integrity.
 - Integrity of materials and/or workmanship should be high as the property type is not particularly rare or unusual in College Area or San Diego.
- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element): An early or rare example reflecting the development of Greek Life associated with the College or due to an association with a significant event.
 - The property should retain integrity of location and setting given its construction within a relatively developed area by the 1960s, when the first known Greek-Life buildings were constructed.
 - The property should retain sufficient integrity of design, materials, and/or workmanship to be associated with its period of construction, and integrity of feeling and association as a fraternity or sorority connected to the College.
 - More flexibility of integrity is available to properties eligible for the local register.
- NRHP B / CRHR 2 / SDRHR B (Persons): Association with a significant person in national, state, or local history.
 - In rare instances, a multi-family development or unit within the development, or a Greek Life property, may be associated with a significant person, if the person's significance, as it relates to their productive life, is strongly tied to the subject property and it is the best representative property associated with the person.
 - The property should retain some, if not all seven aspects of integrity.
 - Integrity of design and workmanship may not be as important if a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today.
 - More flexibility of integrity is available to properties eligible for the local register.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR C (Architecture): Excellent or unusual example of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or for NRHP C/ CRHR3, possesses high artistic values, or for SDRHR C, is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.

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- Some properties in Modern styles that are not known to be associated with a particular architect may be eligible for the San Diego Register, so long as they possess a good degree of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.
- Some level of integrity of location, setting, feeling, and/or association are also necessary.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR D (Work of Master): Representative of the notable work or a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman.
 - Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are most relevant for eligibility under the Architecture and Work of a Master criteria.

Study List

Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
4921	College Avenue	4672710800	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	Minimal Traditional	College Park, associated with Bell-Lloyd
4927	College Avenue	4672710700	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	Minimal Traditional	College Park, associated with Bell-Lloyd
4932	College Avenue	4672720800	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	[not visible]	College Park, associated with Bell-Lloyd
4935	College Avenue	4672710600	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	Spanish Colonial Revival	College Park, associated with Bell-Lloyd
4975	College Avenue	4672710100	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	Minimal Traditional	College Park, associated with Bell-Lloyd, built for SDSU football coach, Leo Callane
4919	Cresita Drive	4672721000	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	Tudor Revival	College Park, associated with Bell-Lloyd
4959	Cresita Drive	4672721300	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	Ranch	College Park, associated with Bell-Lloyd

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Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
College Avenue (both sides) at and including Cresita Drive			Historic District	Various	College Park, associated with Bell-Lloyd
4764	College Avenue	4673941500	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936		Constructed by L.B. Farmer
4754	College Avenue	4674022900	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	Minimal Traditional	Constructed by College Realty Co.
4778	Soria Drive	4673950300	Single-Family, 1931-ca.1936	Spanish Colonial Revival	Constructed by College Realty Co.
College Avenue and Soria Drive, between Arosa Street and Adams Avenue			Historic District	Spanish Colonial Revival, Minimal Traditional	Constructed by L.B. Farmer, College Realty Co. or other Bell-Lloyd associates
4425	Dayton Street	4666920600	Apartment Building	Minimal Traditional	
5484	55 th Street	4621800100	Apartment Building	Mid-century Modern	
5420	55 th Street	462200400	Apartment Complex	Mid-century Modern	College View
6663	Montezuma Road	4681700900	Apartment Complex	Mid-century Modern	Aztec Pacific
5720	Montezuma Road	4660601000	Greek-Life	Modern	Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority; Robert E. Des Lauriers (architect)
6055	Montezuma Road	4671611400	Greek-Life	Modern	Alpha Phi Sorority; Sim Bruce Richards (architect)

Theme: Postwar Residential Development (1945-1974)

The single-family residence is the main property type in the College Area. As discussed in the section **Theme: Early Residential Development (1886-1945)**, residences within the modern boundaries of the College Area had historically developed piecemeal until the postwar period. The postwar period saw the College Area transformed with the large-scale construction of tract housing. From the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s, much of the remaining open space filled with single-family houses. This included infill development around the La Mesa Colony and the 1920s subdivisions, including in the steep ravines that were previously unbuildable, as well as comprehensive tract development by developers, and individually developed, architect-designed homes, to a lesser extent. The construction of freestanding, single-family homes on a large scale was mostly halted by the mid-1960s as larger tracts of vacant land were no longer available. Single-family residential construction since that time has largely been limited to the redevelopment of older homes and infill development.

Multi-family residential development in the form of townhouse developments appeared in the late-1960s on the remaining developable land. They were mostly new forms of homeownership and illustrated the move toward denser housing as vacant land grew more scarce. By the time the 1974 Area Plan is in place, very little land remained undeveloped in the College Area.

Post-World War II Residential Development Pressure

In keeping with national trends of the post-World War II period, San Diego saw increased residential development undertaken to solve the national housing shortage. At first, in the late 1940s and first few years of the 1950s, established residential tracts were infilled and nearly every undeveloped lot was filled. The previously undeveloped swaths of College Area, including areas with steep ravines, were rapidly subdivided, primarily in the 1950s (Figure 47). Suburban tract housing was erected by both large- and small-scale development companies. As described in *San Diego Modernism*, the need for vast amounts of new housing was combined with federal housing policies that supported homeownership along with financial programs that lowered the barriers to funding large-scale development projects. These factors,

brought about a change in the role of the developer in San Diego. During the pre-war years, a developer bought land, provided utilities and infrastructure, and sold it in parcels to individuals. The new homeowner would then hire an architect to design their custom home. The Housing Act of 1949 made it profitable for the developer to build multiple houses from stock plans and

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circumvent architectural services altogether. As a direct result, the suburbs were created as communities of 300-400 nearly identical homes.¹⁴⁶

The presence of San Diego State College, itself rapidly growing in the postwar years, likely helped to support the new developments. Married students, graduate students, faculty, and administrative staff, backed by continued FHA homeownership programs, could find available homes for purchase.



Figure 47. College Area in 1950, looking east with San Diego State College at center-left and new postwar residential development starting to the east and south of the college on mesa top. Source: Source: AE-1950-09, University Archives Photograph Collection, Courtesy of Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University Library & Information Access. Street name added by Page & Turnbull.

In the late 1940s, only a few subdivision maps (shown shaded yellow in Figure 48) were filed, mostly near already developed tracts. The 1950s saw over 50 subdivision maps filed within the College Area (shown shaded green in Figure 48). Known developers of tract housing in College Area in the 1950s include Dennstedt Company, Chris Cosgrove, Dass Construction, Harmony Homes, and Brock Construction.¹⁴⁷ Most housing was constructed by large development companies that were responsible for multiple housing tracts in the College

¹⁴⁶ City of San Diego, *San Diego Modernism: Historic Context Statement*, (October 17, 2007), 36.

¹⁴⁷ *San Diego Modernism*, 37.

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Area; however, some smaller tracts like Brockbank Manor (1951) or Englestad's Aztec Manor (1953) appear to have been undertaken as investment opportunities by local landowners.

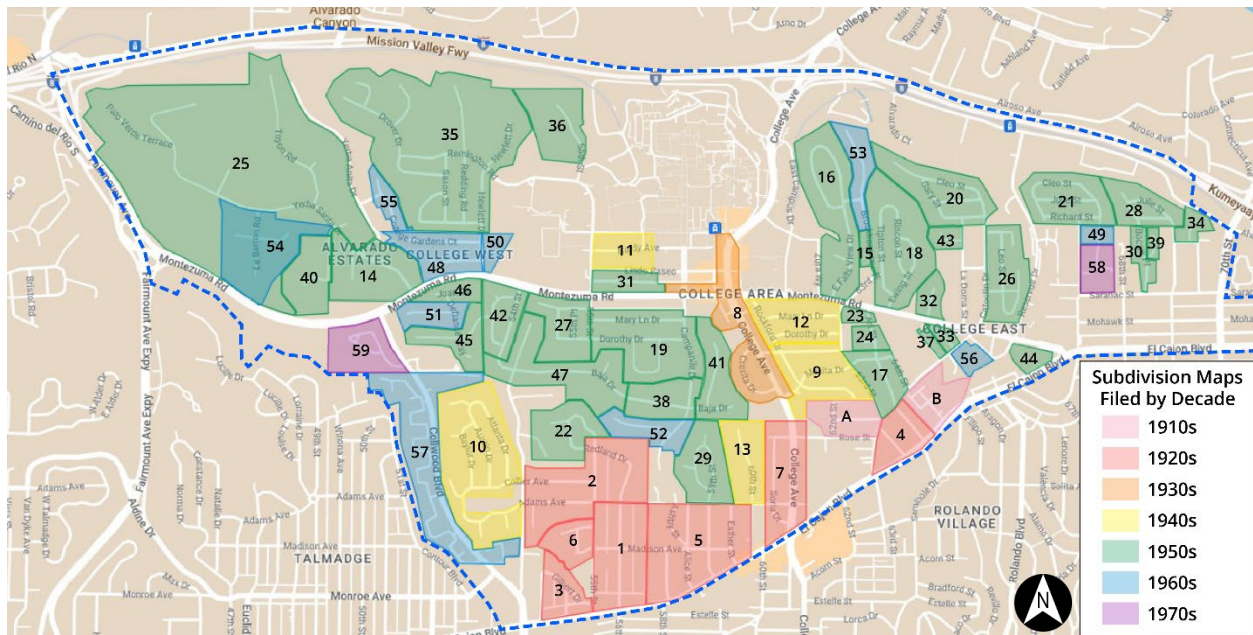


Figure 48. Map of the subdivisions of College Area that are on file with the City, reflecting the large-scale growth in the postwar period. See the Appendices for the subdivision names associated with each number. Basemap: Google Maps. Map of subdivisions created by Page & Turnbull.

The 1950s subdivision maps were filed for areas around Montezuma Road, first building along the relatively flat mesa tops (like the units of Dennstedt Point) toward the northeast side. The work of the Dennstedt Company, which constructed the tract developments of Dennstedt Point Units 1, 2 and 3 (#20, 21, and 28 in Figure 48), is an example of such developments (Figure 50). As one of the furthest points from El Cajon Boulevard, the mesa tops were at that time largely still undeveloped and were more suitable for large-scale tract housing than areas that had seen scattered development or were topographically challenging. The Dennstedt Company constructed single-family residences in a modest Ranch style with integral garages across its three subdivisions.

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Figure 49: Aerial photograph of College Area CPA (blue outline) in January 1953. Note the completion of a significant amount of residential tract development in the flat mesa areas, particularly to the east and southeast of San Diego State College (center), while ravines (dark areas) remain undeveloped. Alvarado Estates at the northwest (upper left) shows early signs of grading. Source: Flight AXN-1953, Frames 10m-110 and 14m-99, January 1953. Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection.

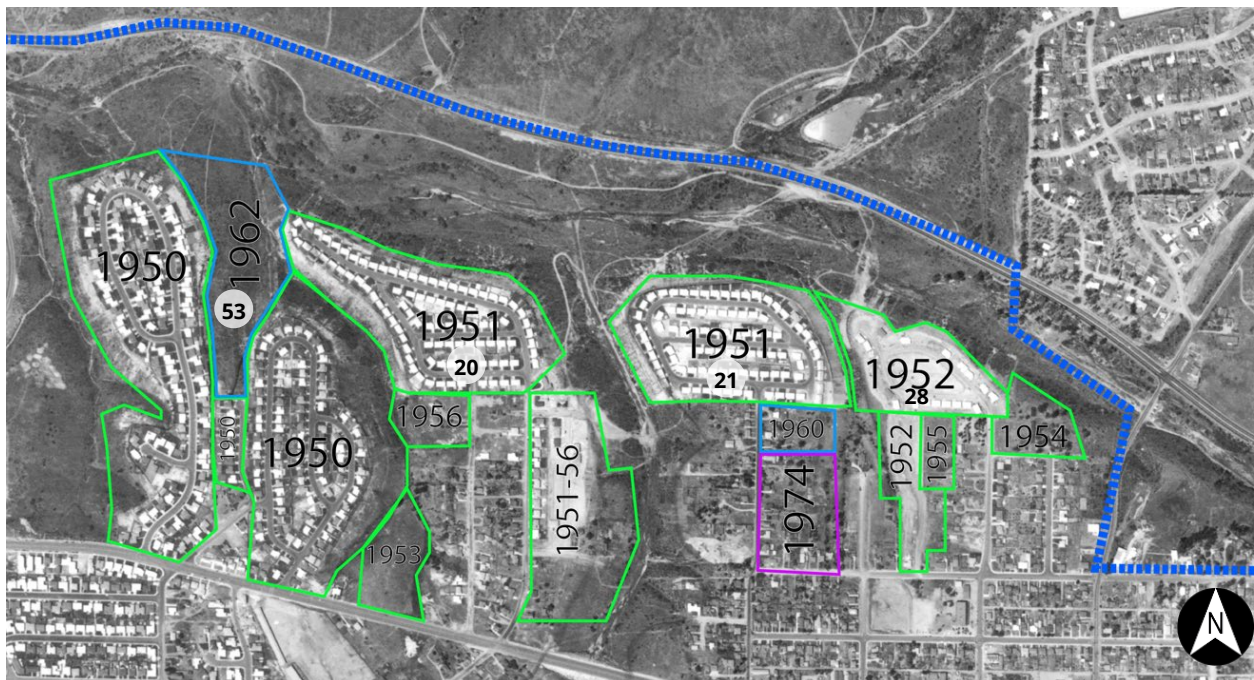


Figure 50: Detail of the northeastern portion of the College Area in 1953 with subdivisions platted and filed in the 1950s outlined in green. The three units of Dennestadt Point (#20, 21, and 28) are Unit 1 to 3 arranged from left to right. Base

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image: Flight AXN-1953, Frames 10m-110 and 14m-99, January 1953. Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection Edited by Page & Turnbull.

Development soon expanded to the center and west areas south of Montezuma Road, again first on the areas that could be easily graded flat and then the more topographically challenging sections, which previously had been less desirable and harder to access (Figure 49). Preparation of these areas included grading canyons and ravines to create additional buildable lots in areas already zoned for single-family residential housing.

The construction of low-slung one-story Ranch and Minimal Traditional style residences is typical across all the 1940s and 1950s subdivisions as they adhered to the federal financing programs' requirements. The residences were largely uniform in their massing, form, and style. Buildings from this period—and into the 1960s—are generally clad in stucco and may have sections of wood siding and/or brick, have hipped roofs, and feature prominent integral garages. These residential tracts have consistent setbacks with front lawns, driveways, and enclosed rear yards. Occasionally, custom, unique, or architect-designed houses may be found among the tract homes as earlier or later developments. Among some of the unusual examples are a few houses in the Collwood Park tract around Rockford Drive and Pontiac Street that appear to feature New Orleans Revival style elements such as wrought iron and fleur-de-lis motifs (#9 in Figure 48).

Northwest Mesa

The northwest edge of the College Area was one of the last large sections of land left relatively undeveloped due to its harsh topography and limited access (Figure 51). A portion of the mesa had been occupied by the Jehovah's Witnesses Beth Shan compound in the early 1940s (refer to **Theme: Civic and Institutional Development (1931-1974)** for additional information on Beth Shan), and was sold to B. "Bud" Allison Gillies and Betty H. Gillies around 1945.¹⁴⁸ The Gillies, who were both involved in aeronautics, purchased the main building (now 4825 Avion Way, altered) to use as a residence and envisioned the surrounding property as a "flying country club."¹⁴⁹ While the country club did not materialize, the Gillies did erect a runway on the mesa for their personal plane—located between and parallel to the modern roads of Yerba Santa Drive and Avion Way—and registered the property as a

¹⁴⁸ Bud Gillies was appointed as a representative of the Civil Aeronautics Association and ran an aviation consulting business. His wife, Betty, was a former Woman Air Service Pilot (WASP) in World War II and a past president and member of the Ninety-Nines, the International Organization of Women Pilots. "S.D. man Named to Advisory Post in Civil Aviation," *The San Diego Union*, March 29, 1946.; Irene M. Clark, "San Diego Branch Follows Earhart Program", *The San Diego Union*, February 8, 1948.

¹⁴⁹ "S.D. man Named to Advisory Post in Civil Aviation," *The San Diego Union*, March 29, 1946. According to City staff, the Gillies also used the property as a working ranch.

private airport in 1949 (Figure 52).¹⁵⁰ The runway is visible in aerials of the 1950s and early 1960s.

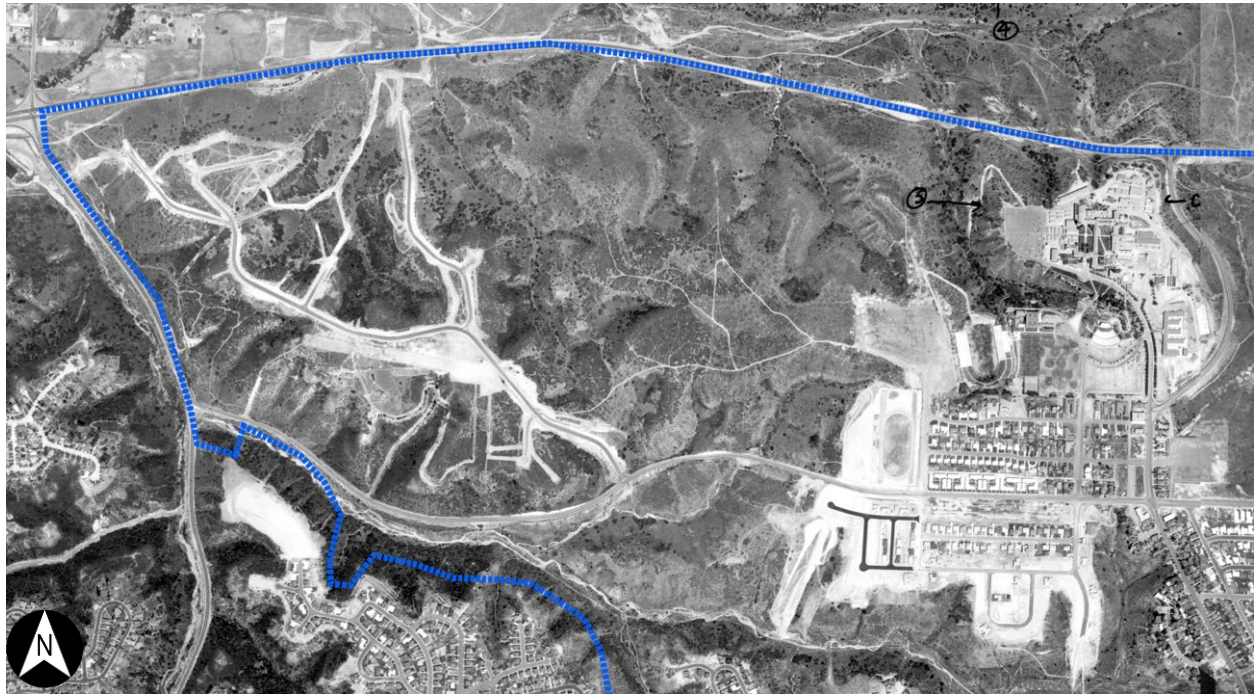


Figure 51. Detail of the northwestern mesa that would become Alvarado Terrace. This aerial photograph was taken in 1953 and illustrates the relative isolation and lack of development in this northwest section of the College Area. Base image: Flight AXN-1953, Frames 10m-110 and 14m-99, January 1953. Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

¹⁵⁰ State of California, Airport Permit, No. 37-23, September 30, 1949.; Paul Freeman, "Gillies Airport, San Diego, CA," *Abandoned and Little-Known Airfields* (website), accessed April 16, 2021, [http://www.airfields-freeman.com/CA/Airfields CA SanDiego N.htm#gillies](http://www.airfields-freeman.com/CA/Airfields%20CA%20SanDiego%20N.htm#gillies); Tom Leech, "The neighborhood airstrip that time nearly forgot," *Mission Valley News*, November 14, 2014, accessed April 16, 2021, <https://missionvalleynews.com/the-neighborhood-airstrip-that-time-nearly-forgot/>; Note that the date that the airport was shut down varied based on the source. It remains unclear how much this airport was used from the mid-1950s, until the Gillies moved out of the area circa 1967.

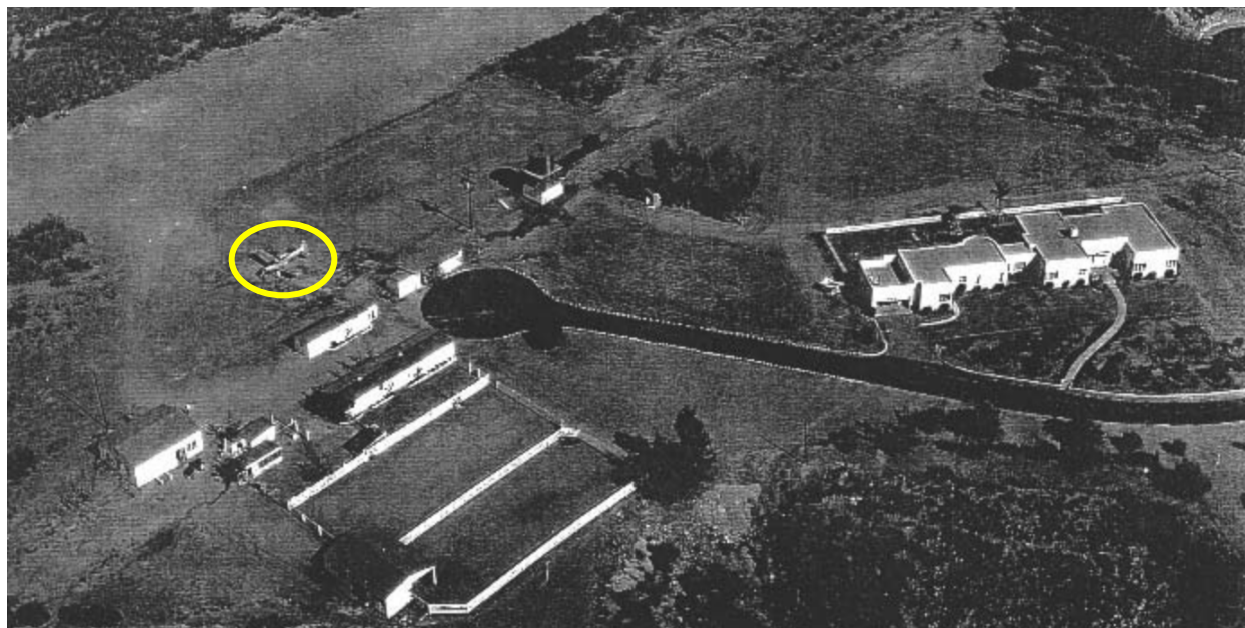


Figure 52. Bird's-eye view of the Gillies residence and former Beth Shan site in 1945, soon after its purchase by the Gillies. An airplane parked on the runway is shown encircled in yellow. Source:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120905040652/http://www.seanet.com/~raines/aerial.html>

The continuing need for housing in the area of San Diego State College spurred a group of white-collar workers largely associated with the College to band together and form a cooperative development along this northwestern mesa. The original 76 families formed an association in 1948 and undertook an initial development of 217-acres with 85 home sites of no less than one-acre.¹⁵¹ The development was primarily geared towards State College employees, but also marketed to attract local businessmen and private fliers. Mention of Gillies Airport was included in advertising materials to attract those who either had personal aircraft or frequent travels who found the idea of local air travel appealing.¹⁵² Today, this development is known as Alvarado Estates (#14, 25, 40, and 54 in Figure 48).

While undertaken in stages, Alvarado Estates followed a different development pattern than the more common tract housing of the area. Instead of being developed as a single tract by a development company, the cooperative ownership of Alvarado Estates funded the grading of the larger land area and brought in infrastructure to serve the future residential community.¹⁵³ The empty lots were then auctioned off, allowing individual homeowners to

¹⁵¹ Clyde V. Smith, "Alvarado: A Dream for Seven Years, Cooperative Living Finds Success; Country Living Offered Within City," *San Diego Union*, March 13, 1955, 1.

¹⁵² Ibid.; Advertisements with mention of the local airstrip continued into at least 1957, with advertising for the Alvarado Terrace subdivision. "Work on Tract Begins," *San Diego Union*, March 17, 1957.

¹⁵³ "History" Alvarado Estates (website), accessed May 10, 2021, <http://www.alvaradoestates.org/about>.

hire an architect or builder to erect their home. While all designs were required to be approved by an architectural committee, this homeowner-driven approach allowed Alvarado Estates to experience a greater variety of architectural styles and design. A number of residents hired local, regional, and international master-architects to design their homes; Alvarado Estates has a concentration of Mid-Century Modern and Ranch style residences designed by well-known architects like Richard Neutra, Cliff May, William Lumpkins, Henry Hester, William See, Louis Bodmer, Sim Bruce Richards, Donald Goldman, Leonard Veitzer, Richard George Wheeler, Lloyd Ruocco, and Rex Lotery.¹⁵⁴ The initial developments started on the north side overlooking what is now the I-8 Highway, and moved to the southern section later in the 1960s and 1970s.

Another large subdivision was College View Estates, Units 1 and 2 (#35 in Figure 48). Started in 1954, the first unit by developer Leonard Drogen was one of his earliest high-end tracts that he branded under the name “Harmony Homes.”¹⁵⁵ The tract offered a selection of standard plans to choose from or custom homes could build to the owner’s specifications (**Figure 53**). Among the noted Modernists architects responsible for some custom designs include Henry Hester, Palmer and Krisel, and Robert Ferris.¹⁵⁶

The initial development offered three- and four-bedroom, Ranch-style houses in the central portion of the tract (around Hewlett Drive, Manhasset Drive, and Remington Road). Later, between 1958 and 1962, more expansive lots at the tract’s northwest area (on Bixel, Dorman, and Drover Drives) were developed with more expressive Ranch and Mid-century Modern designs aimed at professionals.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Several of these architects completed residential projects in Alvarado Estates that are currently listed as San Diego City Landmarks. This is not a complete list of well-known architects who have worked in Alvarado Estates.

¹⁵⁵ “Our Neighborhood,” College View Estates, accessed July 14, 2023, <https://collegeviewestates.org/>.

¹⁵⁶ City planning staff provided the list of noted architects with designs in College View Estates.

¹⁵⁷ “Our Neighborhood,” College View Estates.

the Harmony

today's story of College View Estates!

We're ready to go on Unit #2 of COLLEGE VIEW ESTATES! For the first time such quality homes . . . in such an exclusive area . . . are being offered to San Diegans on a development basis. Homes of \$25,000 and up will soon be constructed.

1 There are still a few 3 and 4 bedroom, 2 bath houses available under VA financing in unit No. 4, ranging in price from \$17,250 with 5% down. Favorable financing for non-veterans.

2 A few view lots are now available—from \$6,000 to \$10,000 (for lot only)—with 60 to 100 ft. frontage. Several lots planned for split-level construction. You may choose any of the Harmony Homes designs, or we shall be happy to build to your specifications.

3 Unit No. 2 of College View Estates overlooks San Diego State College and Mission Valley. Drive to Montezuma and 55th Street and turn North. (See MAP) Model homes open from 10:00 A.M. till 5:00 P.M.

harmony homes

MODEL HOME OPEN FROM 10 A.M. TILL 5 P.M. JU 2-5122

Figure 53. College View Estates advertisement offering a selection of standard plans or custom homes built to the buyer's specifications. Source: San Diego Union, March 6, 1955.

1960s Developments

As buildable land became less available, smaller infill developments were laid out and constructed primarily in the 1960s (shown shaded blue in Figure 48, and two examples outlined in blue in Figure 50). Examples of this type include subdivisions along Campanile Way (College Woods subdivision, 1962, #52 in Figure 48) north of the 1920s subdivisions, the north end of Brockbank Place (Montezuma Park subdivision, 1962, #53 in Figure 48) among the early 1950s tracts at the northeast part of the College Area, and College Gardens Court (Montezuma Park Unit 2 subdivision, 1964, #55 in Figure 48) at the northwest mesa. These were in many of the area's cul-de-sacs that descend into canyons and feature a row of single-family residences on either one or both sides of the street. Larger, two-story and split-level Ranch and Mid-century Modern homes become more evident in the 1960s. Some architect-designed buildings or home models may be in these tracts, such as Palmer & Krisel's

California Contemporary homes in the Aztec Heights subdivision along Hewitt Drive, north of Montezuma Road (#50 in Figure 48).

Toward the late 1960s, townhouse and multi-family apartment developments were constructed on remaining, undeveloped land along the periphery of College Area including along College Area's western boundary of Collwood Boulevard and its northern boundary of Alvarado Road (Figure 54).



Figure 54. 1974 aerial photograph showing the locations of the Collwood Park development (left) and the townhouses and apartments erected at Alvarado Road (right). Base image: Flight AMI-SD-74, Frame 7017, 1974. Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

Townhouse developments are located on multiple lots or in their own larger subdivision that contains landscaped common spaces and private circulation features for vehicles and pedestrians. Rather than rental housing targeted to students, they were of various ownership types, including single owner or shared ownership such as a cooperative or condominium structure. The Collwood Glen subdivision (filed in 1966, #57 in Figure 48) was advertised as “Collwood Park” and is located along the western boundary of College Area and just west of Collwood Boulevard, which was graded and paved in order for the development of the tract. Advertisements for the development focused on its privacy and security, and the presence of various amenities that supported the leisure and recreation of its residents, who were expected to be administrators and professional people.¹⁵⁸ The dozens of small one- and two-story buildings containing “no more than 158 Town Homes”

¹⁵⁸ “Collwood Park,” advertisement, *San Diego Union*, April 16, 1967 and March 17, 1968.

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that were erected for Collwood Park feature a consistent neo-Mansard and Late Modern design aesthetic.¹⁵⁹

The development at Alvarado Road was completed by 1974 to serve the contemporary medical facilities built nearby at Alvarado Hospital Medical Center as well as to support the College.¹⁶⁰ This development has a mixture of housing types including townhouse-style low-scale development ringed by higher density apartment buildings with shared amenities at the center of the development.

¹⁵⁹ "Open Here," advertisement, *San Diego Union*, October 29, 1967.

¹⁶⁰ "Realty Roundup," *San Diego Union*, April 21, 1968; Clyde V. Smith, "Rental Construction Booms in San Diego," *San Diego Union*, April 13, 1969; Reservoir Drive as a street was completed to serve this growing area. "Alvarado Complex to Open Soon," *San Diego Union*, September 1, 1968.

Property Types

Individual Single-Family Residences, 1945-1974

Single-family residences constructed in College Area through the postwar boom are numerous in the area's various residential tracts. Most were developer-built or offered owners some selection from standard plans or models; these are not likely to be individually eligible for historic designation unless they are associated with a significant person. Custom-built residences, including those designed by architects or well-known designers like those in Alvarado Estates, or residences that have other individual distinction, may be eligible for their architecture and design.



Figure 55. An example of the larger-scale and architecturally more expressive single-family residences in Alvarado Estates.

Character-Defining Features of Individual Single-Family Residences, 1945-1974

- Developer-built or architect-designed
- Designed in popular architectural styles of the period, including Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Mid-Century Modern, and other Modern styles
- One- to two-stories in height
- Automobile infrastructure such as prominent integral garages or driveways that lead to garages
- Buildings set-back from the public right-of-way

Subdivisions, 1945 – 1974

Only a handful of the numerous single-family residences in the College Area are likely to have individual distinction, but some groupings or collections may be eligible as historic districts. During the postwar period, large-scale tract development was undertaken on the remaining open land throughout College Area, first prioritizing the remaining open mesas and then adapting the topographically challenging ravines and canyons that remained through

extensive grading. These developer-driven tract developments typically consisted of single-family residences in the Minimal Traditional and Ranch styles. Most of the residences were one-story, though some two-story or one-story-over-garage versions were constructed, depending on the topography. Residences tended to be built within a short period of time within a single tract and typically included only a few standard models with recurring design elements. Houses built in the late-1940s tended to be more modest Minimal Traditional style residences with attached single-car garages. Some may have unusual elements that help distinguish them from the more typical tract housing.

Those built in the 1950s usually were larger, with two-car garages, and Minimal Traditional or Ranch in style. More Mid-century Modern and Contemporary designs appear in the mid-to late-1950s and through the 1960s. These may include small clusters or groups of the same models or designs by notable architects that together have a visual coherence along the street. For those tracts that were subdivided near the end of the period of significance, the subdivisions may have been developed with townhouses or apartments in select locations.



Figure 56. Examples of a subdivision developed at College View Estates that could yield a potential historic district with additional study.

Character-Defining Features of Subdivisions

- Repetitive or unifying site landscaping in the public and semi-public realm, such as uniform building setbacks from the street, front lawns, street trees, planting strips, medians, and driveways.
- One- to two-story single-family houses.
- Collection of houses that display similar or a varied range of architectural styles that date to the period in which the neighborhood was originally developed, typically Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Contemporary, and other types of Mid-century Modern designs.

Townhouse Developments, ca. 1965–1974

Townhouses developments are small cluster of units in multiple individual buildings sharing communal amenities that were built in the late 1960s and 1970s. They typically have a cohesive architectural style with repeating designs and elements—or identical buildings—and are spread throughout a larger landscaped area. These developments share common open space, which may include a central courtyard or landscaped pathways between buildings, and amenities such as pools. Often the automobile-oriented facilities, such as parking lots, garages, and driveways, are conveniently accessible to the units, though the units are typically oriented away from the street to ensure privacy and to orient the residents toward their shared open spaces. Townhouses can have a variety of ownership types including a single-owner or a cooperative or condominium structure.



Figure 57. Example of a townhouse complex at Collwood Park in College Area with shared pedestrian and vehicular amenities.

Character-Defining Features of Townhouses Developments:

- Cohesive grouping of attached units in townhouses or small-scale apartment houses that were designed and built as a planned unit, sometimes within a single subdivision.
- Buildings share similar architectural style and configurations and are typically oriented away from a public street to provide privacy.
- Shared common open space, such as courtyards or landscaped pathways.
- Convenient access to dedicated on-site parking accommodations, such as parking lots, garages, and driveways.
- Pedestrian paths typically oriented to interior of property.

Eligibility Standards

Properties associated with postwar residential development in the College Area may be eligible for listing in the national, state, or local historic register under one of the following criteria:

- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element): An excellent example of a single-family residence constructed within a postwar residential development in College Area and associated with a notable pattern of development of subdivisions; or as the first, last, or best example.
 - The property should retain integrity of location within the associated tract, and integrity of design, materials, and/or workmanship to be associated with its period of construction, and integrity of feeling and association as a postwar single-family residence in College Area.
 - Integrity of setting is likely to be intact given the consistent approach and brief period of development of these subdivisions.
 - Integrity of materials and/or workmanship should be high as the property type is not particularly rare or unusual in College Area or San Diego.
- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element): An excellent example of a townhouse development in the College Area and associated with a notable pattern of development; or as the first, last, or best example.
 - The property should retain integrity of location, design, materials, and/or workmanship associated with its period of construction, and integrity of feeling and association as a 1960s or 1970s townhouse development.
 - Integrity of setting is likely to be intact given the consistent approach and brief period of development of these developments.
 - Integrity of materials and/or workmanship should be high as the property type is not particularly rare or unusual in College Area or San Diego.
- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR F (Historic Districts): An excellent example of a postwar residential development in College Area associated with a notable pattern in the development of subdivisions in San Diego.
- NRHP B / CRHR 2 / SDRHR B (Persons): Association with a significant person in national, state, or local history.
 - In rare instances, a townhouse development or a unit within the development may be associated with a significant person, if the person's significance, as it relates to their productive life, is strongly tied to the subject property and it is the best representative property associated with the person.
 - The property should retain some, if not all seven aspects of integrity.

- Integrity of design and workmanship may not be as important if a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today.
 - More flexibility of integrity is available to properties eligible for the local register.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR C (Architecture): Excellent or unusual example of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or for NRHP C/ CRHR3, possesses high artistic values, or for SDRHR C, is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
 - Few postwar single-family residences are likely to be eligible for the National Register or California Register for their architecture, unless they are architect-designed or unusual examples.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR D (Work of Master): Representative of the notable work or a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman.
 - Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are most relevant for eligibility under the Architecture and Work of Master criteria.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR F (Historic Districts): Well-defined group of single- or multi-family residences, related geographically, historically, and/or aesthetically, and which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of College Area or collectively represent an excellent example of the work of a notable developer or designer.
 - District boundaries may relate to the original subdivision or tract boundaries, or closely related adjacent tracts.
 - Given the large number of postwar tract developments in College Area, those with primarily Minimal Traditional houses or with lower design quality are likely not eligible as historic districts. Those with a higher degree of architectural merit, greater consistency in siting, setbacks, scale, and massing, and exhibiting greater integrity of individual houses, and of the concentration as a whole, are more likely to be eligible.

Study List

The following properties were identified during the research and preparation of this theme. A conclusion has not been reached regarding the significance of these properties, which should be evaluated in the future on a site-specific basis to determine significance or lack thereof.

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Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
5503	Dorothy Drive	4661601100	SFR	Mid-century Modern, Post-and- Beam	Craig Ellwood design
4957	Rockford Drive	4672800500	SFR	Minimal Traditional with New Orleans Revival features	Part of Collwood Park
4966	Rockford Drive	4672801700	SFR	Minimal Traditional with New Orleans Revival features	Part of Collwood Park
5002	Rockford Drive	4672801800	SFR	Minimal Traditional with New Orleans Revival features	Part of Collwood Park
6105	Pontiac Street	4672800300	SFR	Minimal Traditional with New Orleans Revival features	Part of Collwood Park
Various	Yerba Anita Drive		Subdivision	Custom Ranch, Contemporary	Low-slung Ranch houses in canyon
Various	Bixel, Dorman, and Drover Drives		Subdivision	Custom Ranch, Contemporary	College View Estates
Various	Baja Drive		Subdivision	Contemporary	College Glen Unit 2 (Palmer & Krisel)

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Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
					designed buildings)
Various	Hewitt Drive		Subdivision	Contemporary	Aztec Heights (Palmer & Krisel designed buildings)
Various	Collwood Lane		Townhouse Development		Collwood Park
Various	Lambert Lane		Townhouse Development		Chateau Marquis

Theme: Civic and Institutional Development (1931-1974)

The residential population of the College Area reached a critical mass in the years after the College's relocation and was able to support the construction and establishment of civic, institutional, and religious buildings in the College Area.

A fire station was first proposed in 1932 to serve and safeguard the growing community. By 1935, a small fire station at 4704 College Avenue (extant) had been constructed at the corner of College and Adams avenues, one block north of El Cajon Boulevard (Figure 58).¹⁶¹

Houses of worship were erected in the 1930s to early 1940s as residential areas developed further. As the population boomed in the postwar years, some of the earliest religious properties were redeveloped and expanded, while other denominations erected new buildings for growing congregations.

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church was one of the earliest established churches in the modern College Area; its cornerstone was laid in 1938 at 4536 El Cerrito Drive, just north of El Cajon Boulevard in the Redland Gardens tract.¹⁶² The church supported a convent that housed the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart and operated a school run by the nuns.¹⁶³ By 1961, Blessed Sacrament was one of the institutions that needed to expand and the congregation constructed a grand new church at the same location.¹⁶⁴

College Park Presbyterian Church was constructed at Montezuma Road and Campanile Drive around 1951(now Faith Presbyterian Church, extant) and College Lutheran Church was built in 1955 near El Cajon Boulevard and Montezuma Road (demolished).

The College Avenue Baptist Church (originally the Evangelical Baptist Church) congregation developed one of the larger religious complexes in the College Area, which is centered along the east side of College Avenue just north of El Cajon Boulevard. This church was established as early as 1891, but not at this location until 1940 when it erected a new house of worship "of modern Swedish architecture" (since demolished and replaced), across College Avenue from the fire station.¹⁶⁵ The congregation purchased additional property and built a new church to seat 500 in this location in 1947-48, and built a new bible school in 1951 (Figure

¹⁶¹ "Extra Protection to Cost \$212,000," *San Diego Union*, November 1, 1932; "Tuba Lure Blamed as Cows Feed on Fire Station Lawn," *San Diego Evening Tribune*, January 15, 1935.

¹⁶² "City Briefs," *San Diego Union*, September 3, 1938.

¹⁶³ "Woman Pioneer Resident of S.D. Succumbs," *San Diego Union*, June 2, 1942.

¹⁶⁴ Year built of new church building is sourced from the building's cornerstone, which lists 1961 as the year of construction.

¹⁶⁵ "New Church is Dedicated in College Park," *San Diego Union*, April 1, 1940.

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58).¹⁶⁶ With the continued population boom and the erection of single-family homes in the surrounding area, the church needed to expand its facilities significantly to meet demand. In 1966, the existing church building was erected to seat 1,500 congregants. The masonry and pre-cast concrete building, with its freestanding bell tower, was designed by Kenneth Wing, a well-regarded Long Beach Modernist architect.¹⁶⁷

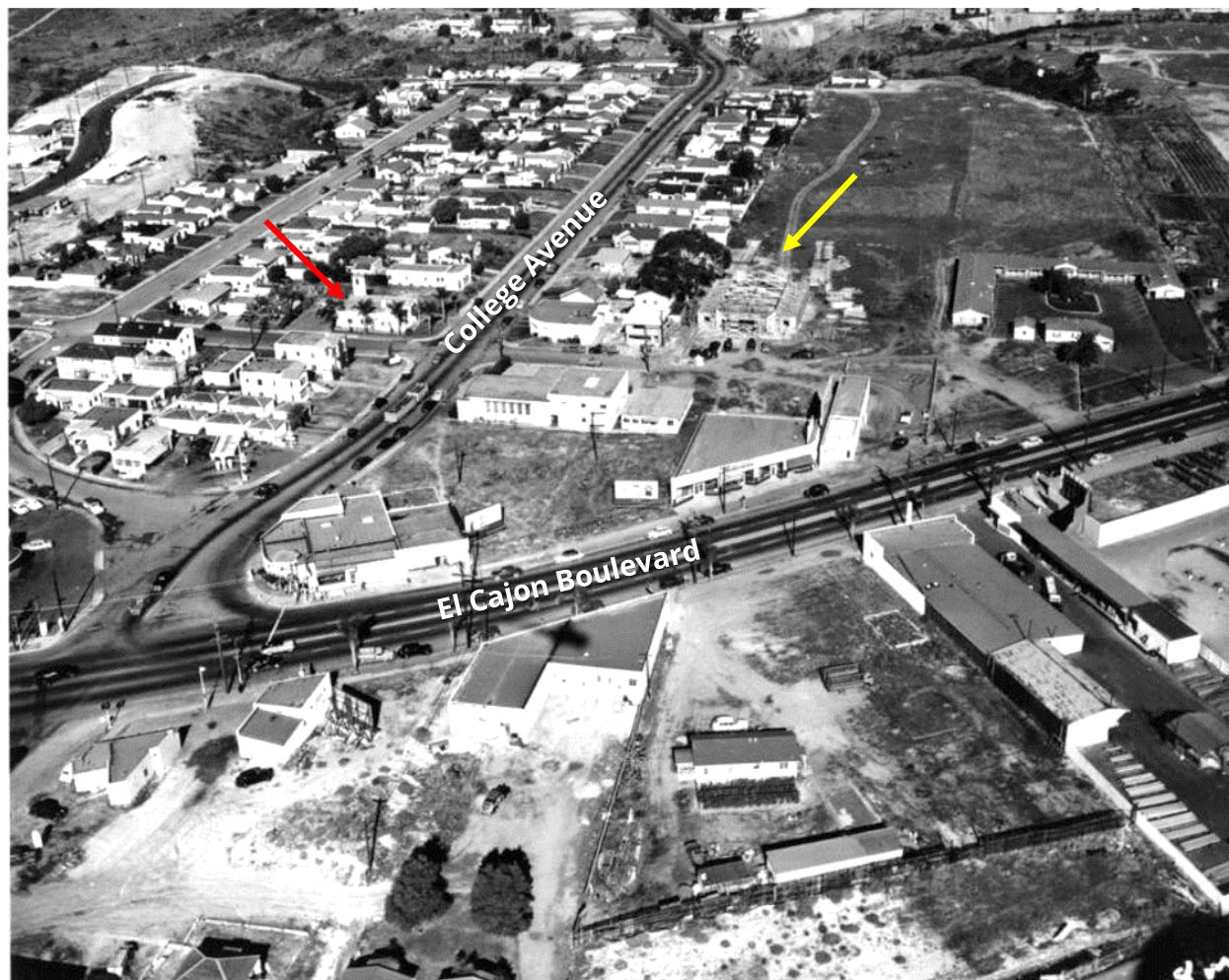


Figure 58. Intersection of El Cajon Boulevard (running east-west) and College Avenue (running north) in 1948. Note the fire station on the west side of College Avenue at Adams Avenue, identified with a red arrow. Directly across on the east side of College Avenue is College Area Baptist Church, with its second church building under construction, identified with a yellow arrow. Source: AE-1948-10, University Archives Photograph Collection, Courtesy of Special Collections & University Archives, San Diego State University Library & Information Access. Street names added by Page & Turnbull.

Local schools were also constructed in the postwar period to serve the growing number of families with young children. In 1940, the John Muir Elementary School (3849 Saranac Street,

¹⁶⁶ "\$40,000 Bible School Building to be Erected," *San Diego Union*, May 5, 1951.

¹⁶⁷ "Baptists Set Work on New Church," *San Diego Union*, July 17, 1965.

present-day Harriet Tubman Village Charter School) in the La Mesa Colony area, replaced its aging wooden buildings with a modern concrete school housing six classrooms and administration uses.¹⁶⁸ In 1951, overcrowding at John Muir caused the construction of the Montezuma Elementary School (now Language Academy Elementary). Located at 64th Street and Montezuma Road, the new school was the 53rd elementary school in San Diego's city system and one of six new schools built simultaneously to address the postwar population boom.¹⁶⁹ In 1957, Hardy Elementary School opened at the west end of the College Area, north of Montezuma Road and 54th Street, to serve the residents in surrounding neighborhoods.¹⁷⁰ Note that the three public schools in the College Area—Harriet Tubman Village Charter School (previously John Muir Elementary), the Language Academy Elementary (formerly Montezuma School), and Hardy Elementary School—are San Diego Unified School District properties that are within SDUSD's purview and are therefore not listed among the property types.

While not an institutional development per se, the unique use of the northwestern part of the College Area (currently occupied by Alvarado Estates) as a Jehovah's Witness-organized compound is a notable use within the future boundaries of College Area that is briefly described below due to its relationship to one extant though altered built resource within the College Area (4825 Avion Way). The far northwestern mesa that is today Alvarado Heights was entirely undeveloped through the 1930s due to its inaccessible location surrounded by extreme topography of ravines and cliffs. Around 1939, this section was acquired by the Jehovah's Witnesses under the direction of Joseph Rutherford and was called "Beth Shan," meaning "House of Security." Rutherford was the second president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania—the legal entity of the Jehovah's Witnesses—and is a notable figure in the history of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Rutherford relocated to San Diego in 1929 due to his poor health and his San Diego home, called "Beth Sarim" or "House of Princes," is located in Kensington-Talmadge (extant, a local San Diego landmark).¹⁷¹ It is believed that the location of Beth Shan on one of the College Area's mesas was selected due to its nearness to Beth Sarim.

From 1939 to 1945, Beth Shan was a discrete compound of approximately 75 acres of canyon and mesa land, and according to a 1942 *Consolation* magazine article also featured "one small and one large dwelling on it and a few outhouses, and consists of some fruit trees and other cultivated patches in aggregate about seven acres, and about 65 acres of unreclaimed brush,

¹⁶⁸ "John Muir Pupils Will Get New School Building Next Fall," *San Diego Union*, March 7, 1940.

¹⁶⁹ "Nine Classrooms Ease Congestion," *San Diego Union*, October 5, 1951; "New School to Open in College Area," *San Diego Union*, October 19, 1951.

¹⁷⁰ "Hardy School Will Open for Pupils Monday," *San Diego Union*, April 18, 1957.

¹⁷¹ Kathleen Flanigan, "Beth-Sarim: House of the Princes," landmark nomination, (August 2001).

either too steep, or rocky, or inaccessible for development.”¹⁷² The “large dwelling” is still extant (4825 Avion Way), though altered. Not included in the description of the site in *Consolation* magazine, was the fact that the site also contained two bomb shelters. Beth Shan was accessible by a single road that was guarded to prevent trespassers and is believed to have been designed as a location for Jehovah’s Witnesses and the resurrected princes of the Book of Hebrews in the Bible to shelter during Armageddon.¹⁷³ Due to the secretive nature of the site, little information was shared by the Jehovah’s Witnesses about the purpose of the site or its structures.

One additional pattern of institutional development in the College Area is centered around the growth of medical facilities in the 1960s. As part of the shift in regional travel from El Cajon Boulevard to the I-8 Highway a grouping of medical facilities were established at the northern end of College Avenue. The San Diego Professional Association, incorporated in 1955, purchased approximately 70 acres stretching along the south side of the Highway (then called Alvarado Freeway) between College Avenue and 70th Street.¹⁷⁴ This strip of land in Alvarado Canyon was below the mesas where postwar tract housing was being developed.

In 1960, the association constructed a 40,000 square foot office building called the Alvarado Medical Center on four acres of their land toward the west end near College Avenue. Most of the shareholders were doctors or dentists who would lease the resulting office spaces. The two-story building, designed by Paderewski-Mitchell-Dean & Associates, featured five wings radiating in a half circle from a central lobby, and an adjacent clinical laboratory, x-ray laboratory, pharmacy, and coffee shop available to the medical office tenants.¹⁷⁵ With the spaces pre-leased, the association had plans to build a similar facility on an adjacent site within the next few years. According to historic aerial photographs, a mirrored building was completed to the east by 1966 (Figure 59).

¹⁷² “San Diego Officials Line Up Against New Earth’s Princes,” *Consolation*, May 27, 1942, 9.

¹⁷³ “Beth-Sarim: House of Princes,” *Facts about Jehovah’s Witnesses*, Accessed July 18, 2023, <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/bethsarim.php>

¹⁷⁴ “Realty Roundup,” *San Diego Union*, December 11, 1960.

¹⁷⁵ “Center Pre-Leased: Land Readied for Construction,” *San Diego Union*, June 21, 1959.



Figure 59. Aerial photograph from 1974 showing the area that had developed as the Alvarado Medical Center and Hospital in the 1960s. Source: Flight AML-SD, Frame 7017, February 1974. Courtesy of UCSB Library Geospatial Collection.

Other medical facilities started to be built on the association's land. The Center for Psychiatric Services was constructed near the medical offices building in 1968 and the Alvarado Convalescent Center (demolished) was completed in 1969.¹⁷⁶ Around 1972, the Alvarado Community Hospital (now Alvarado Hospital Medical Center) opened as a full-service, general hospital serving College Area as well as the wider region. Developed by National Medical Enterprises, Inc. and designed by the Los Angeles-based firm of Langdon & Wilson, it was built next to the convalescent hospital along Alvarado Road and west of Reservoir Drive.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ "Unusual Lines Mark Psychiatric Center," *San Diego Union*, January 28, 1968; "New Hospital Set In Mission Valley," *San Diego Union*, October 17, 1968.

¹⁷⁷ "April Start Slated for \$7.4 Million Alvarado Area Community Hospital," *San Diego Union*, March 8, 1970; "About Us," Alvarado Hospital Medical Center, accessed June 22, 2021, <https://www.alvaradohospital.com/about-us/>.

Property Types

Religious Properties 1931-1974

Religious properties in the College Area are found throughout the plan area and often in or near residential neighborhoods. They may include houses of worship, as well as associated buildings such as fellowship halls, residence halls, and administrative or office buildings. They may also include parochial schools, day care centers, or other education-related properties. Early properties tended to be smaller in scale and found in or around residential neighborhoods. By the 1960s, larger-scale houses of worship were constructed to accommodate growing congregations. Buildings were typically designed in the popular styles of the period of construction including Mid-century Modern and Late Modern.



Figure 60. Examples of religious properties in College Area. Left: 5075 Campanile Drive, Right: 6655 Alvarado Road.

Character-Defining Features

- Tall, typically double-height main sanctuary building
 - Prominent public entrance
 - Spires or towers
 - Clerestory windows, often with stained glass
- Smaller, more understated supporting buildings (administrative buildings, fellowship halls, residences, school buildings, etc.)

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- Designed in popular styles from period of construction, including Spanish Colonial Revival, Mid-Century Modern or other Modern styles

Other Institutional Properties, 1931-1974

College Area may have other significant institutional properties constructed from 1931 to 18974, such as:

- Fire stations
- Libraries
- Social or cultural centers
- Hospitals and medical facilities



Figure 61. Other institutional properties in College Area, including a former fire station (left) and Alvarado Hospital (right).

Character-Defining Features

- Typically large-scale buildings or complexes of buildings
- Prominent main entrances
- Integrated automobile infrastructure, such as surface parking lots, garages, and driveways.
- Designed in popular styles from period of construction, including Spanish Colonial Revival, Mid-Century Modern or other Modern styles

Eligibility Standards

A religious property in College Area may be eligible for listing in the national, state, or local historic register under one of the following criteria:

- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events): Association with a significant event in history.
 - For religious properties eligible for the National Register, Criteria Consideration A applies. This essentially means that a religious property can be eligible under NRHP A if it derives its primary significance from its historical importance, such as an association with a significant event in history.
- NRHP B / CRHR 2 / SDRHR B (Persons): Association with a significant person in national, state, or local history.
 - Individuals important only within the context of a single congregation and not within any other historic context would not meet the level of significance needed for National Register eligibility under Criterion Consideration A.
 - The property should retain some features of all seven aspects of integrity.
 - Integrity of design and workmanship may not be as important if a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today.
 - More flexibility of integrity is available to properties eligible for the local register.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR C (Architecture): Rare, good, or unusual example of a style, type, period or method of construction, or for SDRHR C, is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
 - As stated above, for religious properties eligible for the National Register, Criteria Consideration A applies. This essentially means that a religious property can be eligible under NRHP A if it derives its primary significance from its architectural or artistic distinction.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR D (Work of Master): Representative of the notable work or a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman.
 - Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are most relevant for eligibility under the Architecture and Work of a Master criteria.

Other Institutional properties in College Area may be eligible for listing in the national, state, or local historic register under one of the following criteria:

- NRHP A / CRHR 1 / SDRHR B (Events) / SDRHR A (Special Element): Association with a significant event in history.
 - The property should retain integrity of location, sufficient integrity of design, materials, and/or workmanship to be associated with its period of

- construction, and integrity of feeling and association as an institutional building serving the College Area.
- Some flexibility for the integrity of materials and/or workmanship may be possible if the property is a particularly rare, early, or unusual example, so long as the essential form, scale, and massing of the building remains.
- NRHP B / CRHR 2 / SDRHR B (Persons): Association with a significant person in national, state, or local history.
 - The property should retain some features of all seven aspects of integrity.
 - Integrity of design and workmanship may not be as important if a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today.
 - More flexibility of integrity is available to properties eligible for the local register.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR C (Architecture): Excellent or unusual example of a style, type, period or method of construction, or for SDRHR C, is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
 - Properties are likely to have been constructed in Period Revival, Mid-century Modern, or Modern styles popular 1931 to 1974.
- NRHP C / CRHR 3 / SDRHR D (Work of Master): Representative of the notable work or a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman.
 - Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are most relevant for eligibility under the Architecture and Work of a Master criteria.

Study List

The following properties were identified during the research and preparation of this theme. A conclusion has not been reached regarding the significance of these properties, which should be evaluated in the future on a site-specific basis to determine their significance or lack thereof. Religious Properties are listed first, followed by Other Institutional.

Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
4747	College Avenue	4674204400	Religious Building	Late Modern	College Avenue Baptist Church
4855	College Avenue	4673800700	Religious Building	Late Modern	Beth Jacob Congregation
6115	Montezuma Road	4671621500	Religious Building	Mid-century Modern	Chabad House (may have been constructed for a different use)

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Street Number	Street Name	APN	Property Type	Style	Name and Comments
5075	Campanile Drive	4670201200	Religious Building	Mid-century Modern	Faith Presbyterian Church
4540	El Cerrito Drive	4667201300	Religious Building		Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church
4540-4544-4530	El Cerrito Drive 56 th Street	4667202600	Religious Building	Spanish Colonial Revival with Modern elements	Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church (convent and school historically)
4967	69th Street	4681622800	Religious Building	Late Modern	San Diego International Church
4825	Avion Way	4612901700	Religious Building	Unknown	Dwelling associated with Beth Shan compound, altered
4704	College Avenue	4674022300	Other Institutional	Spanish Colonial Revival	Originally a fire station, now College Area Business District office
6655	Alvarado Road	4635903000	Other Institutional	Late Modern	Alvarado Hospital
4710	College Avenue	4674022500	Other Institutional	Mid-century Modern	Originally the College Heights Library

Preservation Goals and Priorities

Based on the work to date for College Area, the following recommendations are offered to continue preservation efforts related to these properties:

Recommendation 1: Conduct Further Study of Specific Subdivisions, Developers, Builders, and Architects

The College Area CPA has over 50 subdivisions, with most filed after World War II. Several were started by larger developers and builders who were active in San Diego, such as the Dennstedt Building Company and Leonard Drogin. At the same time, some subdivisions were spearheaded by smaller investors, who may have only developed more than one or two tracts. Additional research to understand the active developers, their relationships to each other and various developments within College Area and in San Diego, the tract house models used, and the relative level of design, planning, and historic or architectural significance among the subdivisions can help with identifying eligible resources.

Similarly, several well-known architects have examples of their work in the College Area. Some regularly partnered with certain developers, where their model home designs may have been used in their subdivisions. Others designed individual, custom homes for specific clients. Additional research to identify the works by known architects in the College Area, their overall body of work, and the relative significance of the examples within the College Area is recommended. Additional research may uncover lesser known architects with also noteworthy designs.

Recommendation 2: Conduct Further Study of Specific Property Types

As part of a survey, or prior to surveying, additional study of specific property types may be helpful to assist surveyors with determining eligibility. This may include identifying different types of Minimal Traditional housing, particularly those from the late 1930s and early 1940s that may be tied to New Deal housing programs. It may also include the late-1960s townhouse developments, which may have been part of a larger movement in multi-family housing, planned developments, or new ownership structures such as condominiums, cooperatives, etc.

Recommendation 3: Complete a Survey of the CPA

Conduct a reconnaissance survey of the College Area based upon this Historic Context Statement to identify potentially eligible historic resources. Some postwar tract developments where Minimal Traditional tract housing is prevalent may not require property-by-property survey. Subdivisions with a mix of tract houses, custom houses, and

architect-designed properties, such as Alvarado Estates, College Estates, and others, may require more intensive surveying to determine if groupings may be eligible as historic districts with potential boundaries, contributors, and non-contributors. Individual properties that may be eligible should also follow with more intensive surveys to document site history, and architects or builders.

Recommendation 4: Consider Policies for Early Commercial Properties along El Cajon Boulevard

Few early, pre-World War II commercial properties remain on El Cajon Boulevard. Though an increasingly rare property type, the buildings are generally modest or so altered as to be unrecognizable from the street's early development period. While some may be eligible for the San Diego Register, the City may want to consider other planning policies that seek to protect or encourage retention of these resources. Development along El Cajon Boulevard is likely to intensify, and these resources may come under threat as redevelopment opportunities.

Recommendation 5: Develop Tools to Identify Resources from Pre-American Periods

This Historic Context Statement focuses on the built environment during the American Period. Resources related to Indigenous history as well as the Spanish and Mexican eras may remain in the College Area, given its relatively late development. Consider conducted a Cultural Resource Survey or ethnographic study, with the appropriate expertise as well as involvement of the Indigenous communities, to establish a framework for surveying and identify archeological, tribal, and culturally significant resources from these periods.

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Appendices

List of Subdivisions in College Area

Below are the subdivisions file in the College Area CPA, as available online from the San Diego County Survey Records System, <https://srs.sandiegocounty.gov/#/s?a=a>. The numbers are reference to map that follows as well as Figure 48.

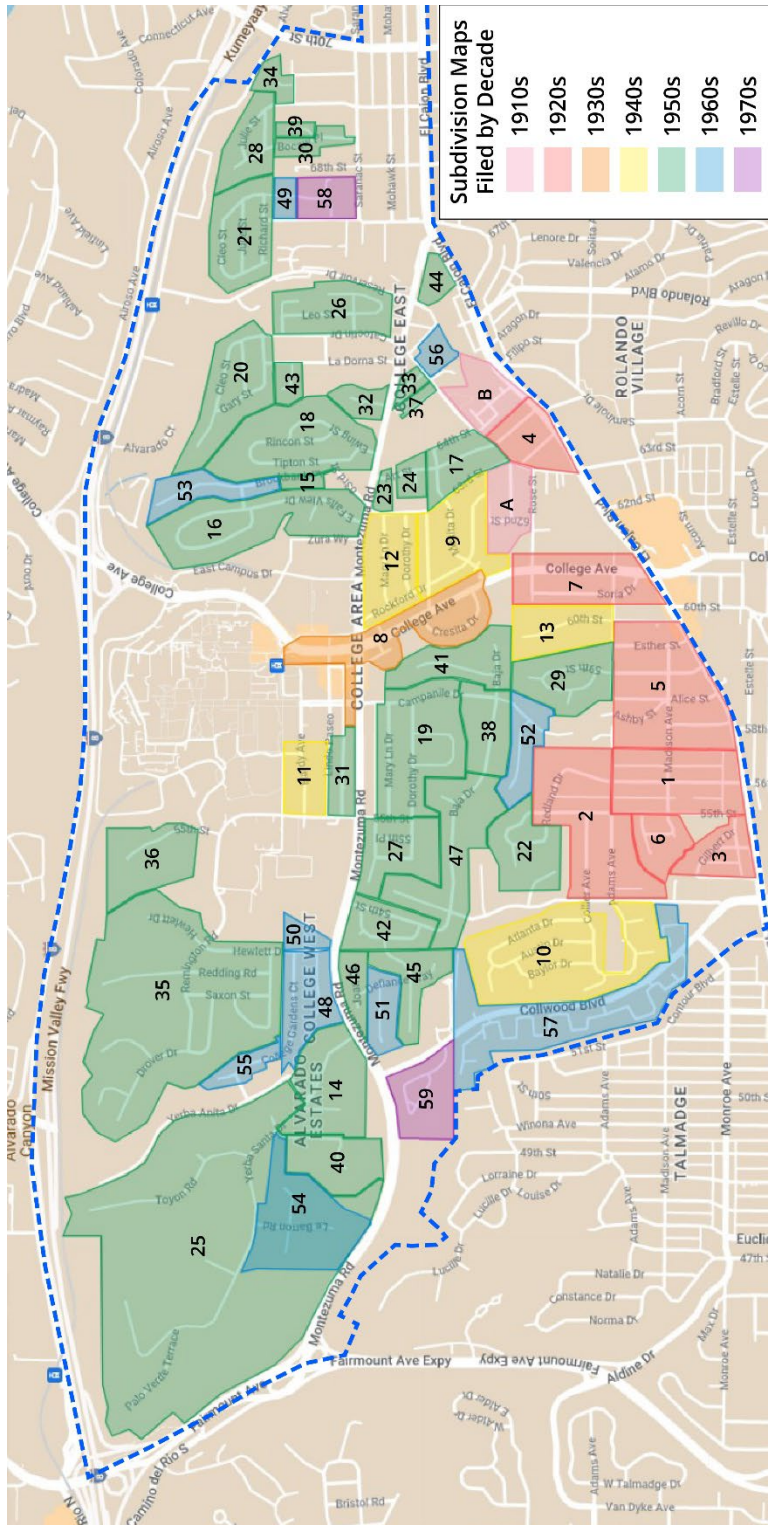
No.	Subdivision Name	Year Map Filed
A.	Alvarado Heights	1914
B.	Oakmere	1913
1.	Redland Gardens	1923
2.	Redlands Gardens Extension	1923
3.	Highland Gardens	1924
4.	Acacia Park	1926
5.	El Cerrito Heights	1926
6.	Cajon Terrace	1927
7.	El Retiro	1927
8.	College Park	1931
9.	Collwood Park	1947
10.	Collwood, Unit 1	1947
11.	College Park, Unit 3	1948
12.	Collwood Park 2	1948
13.	Cosgrove Terrace	1949
14.	Alvarado	1950
15.	Brockbank Manor	1950-1951
16.	Collwood Manor	1950
17.	Collwood Park, Unit 3	1950
18.	Cosgrove Mesa	1950
19.	Collwood Terrace, Units 1 and 2	1951-1952
20.	Dennstedt Point, Unit 1	1951
21.	Dennstedt Point, Unit 2	1951
22.	El Cerrito Heights, Unit 4	1951
23.	Montezuma Heights	1951
24.	Smith Terrace	1951
25.	Alvarado, Unit 2	1952
26.	Catoctin, Tracts 1 to 5	1952-1965
27.	College Heights	1952
28.	Dennstedt Point, Unit 3	1952
29.	Piedmont Estates	1952
30.	Whitefield	1952
31.	Collwood Gardens	1953

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No.	Subdivision Name	Year Map Filed
32.	Engelstad's Aztec Manor	1953
33.	Engelstad's Aztec Manor, Unit 2	1953
34.	Camino Vista	1954
35.	College View Estates, Units 1 and 2	1954
36.	College View Estates, Unit 3	1954
37.	Dass Manor	1954
38.	Campanile Terrace, Unit 1	1955
39.	Colony Park	1955
40.	Alvarado Terrace	1956
41.	Campanile Terrace, Units 2 and 3	1956
42.	College Knolls	1956
43.	Marino Terrace	1956
44.	Montezuma Manor	1957
45.	Picard Estates, Units 1 and 2	1957-1959
46.	College Gardens, Unit 1	1958
47.	College Glen, Unit 2	1959
48.	College Gardens, Unit 2	1960
49.	Tomasa Terrace, Unit 2	1960
50.	Aztec Heights	1961
51.	Picard Estates, Unit 3	1961
52.	College Woods	1962
53.	Montezuma Park	1962
54.	Alvarado, Unit 3	1963
55.	Montezuma Park, Unit 2	1964
56.	Telstar Subdivision	1964
57.	Collwood Glen	1966
58.	Chateau Marquis	1974
59.	Collwood Meadows	1979

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Notable Designers with Known Work in the College Area

The following biographies are excerpted the San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement (2007) and the City of San Diego Biographies of Established Masters (revised October 2020).

Dennstedt Co.

The Dennstedts are an important element of the history of San Diego, having built many single-family residences, commercial buildings and apartments from the 1920s through the 1940s. From 1926 to 1988, seven different companies associated with the Dennstedt family were established, three of which have been established as Master Builders by the Historical Resources Board.

Brothers A.L., C.A., E.L. and A.E. Dennstedt, originally from Minnesota, sold real estate in the Midwest in the early part of the 20th century until the market collapsed in 1923. In 1926, they moved to San Diego and established the Dennstedt Company. They hired skilled draftsman Henry Landt to be the director of drafting. The company built custom houses, largely in the Spanish Eclectic style.

By 1929, the Dennstedt Company had built hundreds of houses, and were advertising themselves as the largest homebuilder in San Diego. They were known for building high-quality custom houses of different sizes, hiring skilled craftsmen and retaining those employees long-term. Henry Landt also kept the company at the cutting edge of innovations in the field. They adopted the business strategy of buying vacant lots in existing subdivisions, finding buyers who were willing to contract with them to build a house on the lot, and offering clients financing for both the lot purchase and home construction costs. In this way, they became prolific builders of custom houses. They also constructed hotels and other commercial buildings.

In 1933, A.L. sold his interest in the company as a result of the dispute with his brothers, likely over whether to enter the tract housing market and work with low-cost FHA loans. In 1934, A.L. recruited Henry Landt and his brother A.E to join him in forming the "A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company." A.L. and A.E. continued to build custom houses, using their method of selling lots to clients who were willing to contract with them to build their houses. They never built tract housing, but they eventually began building speculation houses for clients with FHA loans. One of their projects was the Reynard Hills subdivision, which exhibits a variety of architectural styles including Spanish Eclectic, Monterey, Cape Cod, and Old English. The company lasted until 1941, at which point residential construction largely stopped as the US entered World War II, and Landt became a construction engineer for Convair.

C.A. and E.L. Dennstedt took over the helm of the original branch of the company. Despite the Great Depression's impact on development activity, they benefitted from FHA funding made available in response to the housing shortage, as well as from a building boom that began around 1936, which resulted from reinvigoration of the local economy from the injection of Federal money into the local aircraft industry. They also continued selling lots to clients who agreed to contract with them to build houses on the lots. Around 1938, they changed their company name to "The Original Dennstedt Company" to better differentiate themselves from the "A.L. and A.E. Dennstedt Building Company." They also began building minimal traditional FHA tract housing. While these houses were still of a high quality, they did not reach the same level of style and attention to detail as their earlier work in custom houses. After World War II, the company shifted to building in modernist styles. In the late 1940s, they built what may have been the first shopping center in San Diego, originally called Dennstedt Village and now called Redwood Village, on 54th Street. The Original Dennstedt Company dissolved in 1960.¹⁷⁸

Richard J. Neutra

Richard Joseph Neutra was born in Vienna in 1892. He studied architecture in Vienna before immigrating to the US in 1923. After initially settling in New York, Neutra moved to Chicago and worked briefly with respected architects Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. He moved to LA in 1925 and established his own practice. It was here that he quickly earned a reputation as a pivotal figure in the development of the International Style.

Neutra's work evolved over time, and accordingly his career is divided into two distinct periods. In the first period, lasting from approximately 1927 to 1942, Neutra focused primarily on the design of 43 single-family houses and gained recognition for his mastery of the International Style. Projects designed during this period tended to be modernistic, flat-roofed, and constructed largely of metal, steel and prefabricated panels. During the second period, beginning in 1943, Neutra's work evolved to project a warmer and more relaxed character, largely through the incorporation of soft materials such as wood and natural stone. It was also during this period that Neutra focused on the concept of transparency and began building in the Post and Beam style and employing his trademark "spider-leg" out riggings to deliberately distort the visual boundary between interior and exterior spaces.

In 1949, Neutra and fellow architect Robert Alexander established a partnership that focused on designing public and commercial structures. Together, Neutra and Alexander were responsible for designing many high-profile projects throughout California, including the

¹⁷⁸ This biography is excerpted from City of San Diego, *Biographies of Established Masters* (revised October 2020), 69-70.

Elysian Park Heights housing project in LA and the redevelopment plans for Sacramento. The firm dissolved in 1960, and Neutra establish the firm Neutra and Associates with his son later that year.¹⁷⁹

Palmer & Krisel

William Krisel was born in Shanghai in 1924 to US citizens. His family moved to Beverly Hills in 1937. Krisel attended USC's School of Architecture, where he was taught by Calvin Straub, Raphael Soriano and Garrett Eckbo. As a student, he worked in the offices of Paul Laszlo and Victor Gruen. Krisel graduated from USC in 1949. He became a licensed architect in 1950 and a licensed landscape architect in 1954.

Upon graduating, Krisel went into partnership with Dan Saxon Palmer. Palmer & Krisel began their work in commercial buildings and custom homes, but soon shifted to tract housing. By 1952, their 32 Post and Beam construction methods had become popular among tract developers because they were both cost-effective and appealing to buyers. From 1957 to 1963, Krisel built thousands of tract houses in Palm Springs. He and Palmer diverged from cookie-cutter construction to create unique houses by varying rooflines and setbacks. Their contemporary designs and modular Post and Beam construction methods allowed for large windows and indoor-outdoor living spaces. Krisel also employed open floor plans and clerestory windows and helped to proliferate the Modernist "butterfly" roofs in California.

Palmer & Krisel began working on residential projects in San Diego in the late 1950s, going on to design numerous housing tracts. The partnership dissolved in 1964, and the San Diego office became Krisel's solo office in 1966. He then partnered with Abraham Shapiro from 1969 to 1980. In 1980, he resumed working independently, until his death in 2017.

Over the course of his career, Krisel designed a wide variety of buildings, including custom houses, tract houses, high- and low-rise office and apartment buildings, shopping centers, industrial buildings, schools, hospitals, religious building, and motels. He claimed that over 40,000 housing units were built from his designs. He was extensively recognized for his work, earning the AIA Lifetime Achievement Award and the Palm Springs Lifetime Achievement Award, as well as recognition by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the National Association of Home Builders, USC, and the City of Beverly Hills, among others.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ This biography is excerpted from City of San Diego, *Biographies of Established Masters* (revised October 2020), 42-43.

¹⁸⁰ This biography of William Krisel of Palmer & Krisel is excerpted from City of San Diego, *Biographies of Established Masters* (revised October 2020), 31-32.

Sim Bruce Richards

Sim Bruce Richard was born in Oklahoma in 1908. In 1930, he began studying architecture at UC Berkeley but soon switched to art. He excelled in weaving fabrics and rugs with abstract designs. His weaving caught the attention of Frank Lloyd Wright, who personally invited him to study architecture at his Taliesin estate in Wisconsin. Richards left Berkeley and studied at Taliesin from 1934 to 1936.

Richards moved to San Diego around 1938 and initially worked as a civilian architect for the US Navy. He also worked in the architectural offices of William Templeton Johnson and Harold Abrams before opening his own practice around 1949. He focused on residential design, although he also designed several public and commercial structures. There are currently hundreds of structures attributable to Richards throughout the San Diego area.

Reflecting his training in organic design at Taliesin, Richards' body of work is characterized by unpainted wood and often rough or unfinished appearances, as well as complex roof forms, angular massing, and site-specific design. Richards often collaborated with friends who were artists and 50 craftsmen, incorporating their crafts such as metalworking, tilework, and masonry in his home designs.

Although he never received a formal degree in architecture, Sim Bruce Richards was inarguably one of San Diego's most accomplished architects of the twentieth century. Building upon the principles of Frank Lloyd Wright, he regarded his designs as "functional artwork," and his projects demonstrate his attempt to establish an intricate balance between functionality and aesthetic appeal.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ This biography is excerpted from City of San Diego, *Biographies of Established Masters* (revised October 2020), 49-50.